THE ASTRAL LIGHT

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PREFACE.

THAT religion and science are not irreconcilable, may be proved to the satisfaction of any student of occult, or spiritual science. It will become evident to such student, ere he has proceeded very far in his researches, that occult science gives the only true exposition of the mysteries of religion, and, from the spiritual verities it unfolds, becomes so intimately blended with religion in his mind, that at length it assumes the first place, and becomes, for him, religion pure and simple. From it he learns the highest worship of that supreme principle we call GOD,—the mystery of Creation, and the secret of the laws which control the universe. He learns to regulate his life in accordance with those spiritual laws of harmony which govern all nature. He thus becomes polarised to the highest point of attraction—the Supreme Centre;—and at length, by the slow progress of spiritual evolution, he attains to a condition of one-ness with the divine principle—which is the final state—the supremest light—omniscience for man, beyond which there can be nothing.

It has become evident of late years that the rich field of spiritual science is to

be opened, with less reservation than formerly, to all honest and true men who desire to explore it. In fact, the progress of mankind sweeps in the direction of spiritual science. Its revelation would seem about to occur almost spontaneously. All the forces of nature, following an irresistible impetus, appear to concur helpfully towards that end. Our surprise and interest are continually being awakened by some great discovery, either of new and unsuspected powers possessed by man, or else of some hidden secret of nature which must add new advantages to his life, and effect a still broader stretch of intellectual greatness than he has yet attained.

The knowledge of the occult, or hidden science, can, therefore, no longer be withheld. The *spiritual* man steps into it as into a rightful heritage. It is, in short, evolution—inevitable, and arbitrary, which brings about this climax. Nature is the hand-maiden of evolution for her human children; and she wears no veils for that man who, cleansed and purified, reverently stands upon the threshold of her mysteries and demands to know them. Man never has, however, any such aspiration until by evolution he has mentally reached that point.

There are many, the writer of this book sensitively feels, far better qualified than herself for the work she has herein attempted; and to such minds, so far in advance of her own, this incomplete production is not offered, except insomuch as she hopes for their sympathy and approval.

Her treatment of the vast subjects touched upon is very cursory, leaving out the elaborate details of profounder teachings which can only appeal to, or be comprehended by, the advanced student of mystic science.

She has given to Nature in the following pages a prominence which might appear at the first glance like doing away with a Creator, or first cause. But, in reality, as nature is the manifestation of God to man, in such sense, all allusion to nature, nature's laws, and nature's works, implies the Will of God, without whom she would be non-existent.

In alluding to "churches," the writer does not mean to attack religion, or the inner spiritual light and life of churches, which is their only *raison d'être;* but those gross externalities which have their birth in a crude misconception of truth; and those abuses which have been suffered to overgrow them for centuries, to the almost total obscuration of what they were designed to teach.

Also, in treating of "Modern Spiritism," the writer has aimed at pointing out error: the blunders caused by ignorance of certain facts as taught by occult science; and of the laws which should control those forces set in motion by the methods of Spiritists. By no means would she wish, nor does she intend, to dissemble the greatness and importance of the investigation pursued by Spiritists. On the contrary, this volume enforces the absolute necessity of cultivating, to the highest extent possible, the faculties of the soul, in the furtherance of spiritual evolution.

In Spiritism a certain confusion would seem to exist as to the character of those other-world manifestations upon which it has founded its philosophy. The mere external force-phenomena, usually ascribed to the interposition of exalted and purified beings, are in reality the production of inferior entities not yet liberated from the impurities of matter as it exists in their world; that is to say, the psychic substance which forms the substance of their world, and their bodies, and which they manipulate as we manipulate the denser substances of our world: possessing the magical power of condensing ethereal substance to the thicker consistency of matter upon our plane, by which objects, *before unseen*, become visible and tangible to our grosser senses. Possessing, also, the manipulative skill over astral forces by which they can transport objects from great distances, penetrating walls, and the densest of substances in our world; besides various other methods they have of manifesting upon our plane of life, startling us, in our backward mental condition, into admiration and wonder. We charitably ascribe to them a great spiritual progression beyond ourselves, and imagine they can bring to us only the amenities and graces of the highest spiritual life. But in our ignorance we do not yet know what the highest spiritual life really *is*. The beings who manifest to us in this material way, do not transcend the general mental and spiritual condition of mortals, except insomuch as, inhabiting a plane of more ethereal matter, they possess those advantages of reading in the astral light things

we cannot yet know, and of manipulating astral forces and substances. Our own condition of ignorance is as yet so low that we are astounded at what they produce, and exalt them, in our imagination, to a position they are not entitled to hold. This hallucination becomes a fruitful source of danger to those who would invite a too intimate consociation. We should remember what "Mejnour" says in "Zanoni": "There may be things around us that would be dangerous and hostile to man if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, *merely by different modifications of matter.*"

Spiritism would make us acquainted with the facts of this existence upon another plane of matter, and the facility possessed by beings inhabiting that plane to give us sensible evidences of their existence. And here Spiritism stops short. It offers no solution of the many problems, incongruities, contradictions, and dangers which immediately compel observation upon that field of intercourse between the inhabitants of the two adjoining planes, which is thrown open by the discovery of the facts it unfolds. At this point—as if arrived at a terminus from which many roads branch out—Spiritists have hitherto taken their stand; perplexed, indifferent, or ignorant as to which of the several roads indicated they are to follow, if they intend to go on. But they cannot afford to hesitate. They have been forced by the extraordinary impetus of the wave of occult phenomena which has swept over the world—adding daily to their adherents by thousands—into a prominent position, and they

will become morally culpable if they do not point the true and safe way for an intercourse which, if allowed to extend itself *unlawfully*, must precipitate mankind into a species of moral and spiritual degradation, painfully manifest in the oldest nations on the earth, and in savage races, all of whom are addicted to neither more nor less than practices of Black Magic and Sorcery.

Spiritists seem to be contented with what they have gained, and do not seek, apparently, to study their subject more deeply; or according to the canons of a legitimate science, whose directions, if followed, would effectually bar the inroad of injurious elements from the world so intimately associated with our own; from which has always proceeded those powerful impulses towards moral disorder which are sometimes overwhelming to men in the body.

At the present day there exists in the world a great ignorance as regards the operations of mere Sorcery, which are apt to be confounded with the more legitimate achievements of a pure Spiritualism, which seeks the elevation of mankind, not its degradation. It is time for the good of the human race, that the difference should be learned and taught; for thereupon hang consequences of the most vital importance to the world.

That power over the hidden forces of nature, conferred by the study of occult, or spiritual science, in ancient times was called "*Magic.*" The original meaning of this word, which associated it solely with the Wise Men of old—the *Magi*, or *Magians*—has been lost. "Magician," in olden times, was a title of honour, accorded

to the Priests of Nature. But in magic, as in all other things, there is the face and reverse of the shield—the *right* and the *left-hand path.* From human perversion, the left-hand path became the most extensively pursued, and its diabolical effects upon humanity caused it to be dreaded and abhorred. At length, through blind ignorance, the true and the false became confounded in one; the effect of which was that the true receded into the isolation of its sanctuaries, veiling itself still more deeply from blinded eyes; and the word "magic" became for the profane multitude the synonym of evil and diabolism. Nevertheless, all so-called *miracles* achieved by the purest and best of mankind, could only, properly speaking, be classed under that head; but in such case it would be the heavenly power attained by the right and lawful study of *spiritual science*, or Divine Magic.

The secret of all magic resides in the will of man. We may be said to be all unconscious magicians for every effect produced in this world is the outcome of that ability to mould natural things, or the externals of life, into harmony with the volitional power which determines that "*It shall be!*" A magician who wields a greater power than ordinary men possess upon a spiritual plane invisible to ordinary eyes, does no more. The effect upon lower minds is that of an incomprehensible and miraculous achievement; but it is the altitude of evolution which determines the transcendence of the will-act.

The only difference between the achievements of the spiritual man and the natural man is that

the former works upon two planes of life, and the latter ostensibly upon one only, objectivating the conceptions of his imagination by the employment of substances and forces on the material plane, of whose manipulation he has acquired the knowledge. The spiritual man, possessing superior knowledge, works upon the astral plane of etheric substance; and also upon the physical plane, wielding occult forces with the conscious will of a finite Creator, and producing results of a magnitude appalling to less advanced minds. It is the gift of superior knowledge, the attainment of a transcendental science which has its own methods of elucidation, for which an especial mental training and growth are necessary; wherein the human being superadds new faculties to those of his merely physical organization; wherein he steps consciously, without physical death, into the life of the next world, and thenceforth lives in the one or the other, as he wills to do.

It is evident that the higher the culture, the more is this dual power attained and brought into action, the most elevated and highly cultured beings amongst us exercising more or less of psychic power in the ordinary routine of life, unconsciously, or at least without the knowledge of what it is. Indeed, we have only to realize the existence of the soul *in the body*, to see that such mode of life is the inalienable right of a human being. Therefore, the more of the soul, or the spiritual part of man is evolved, the greater and larger becomes the exercise of its powers and prerogatives, whilst the merely physical powers wane into insignificance.

We may say that we live in a world of magic. Every sensation of delight, of fascination, or of charm, springs from the conscious or unconscious exercise on the part of some *other* mind of that magical will-effect—the power to rivet attention, to please, to fascinate. To exercise this power in harmony with the highest is to prove an evolution into the highest. The pleasure derived from the beauties of nature, which speak to each mind independently, apparently, of the influence of other minds, arises from that refinement of individual nature which has been brought about by the decisions of the Will, in the selection of such mental food as would conduce to refinement. Hence, here again, we are the magicians who endow nature with a beauty she does not possess for the uncultivated mind ; who penetrate behind her veils, and interpret her subtle speech to man. The poet creates the beauty he sees, by casting upon objects the glamour of an exalted imagination ; and he wields the wand of a magician when he throws upon the astral light, for other minds, the beautiful pictures of his transcendent thought. The pleasure derived from the society of the most elevated minds, pure in thought, calm in temperament, kindly in feeling, is again the magical effect of a will so constituted that it draws into its life only that which is productive of good and beauty, whence an aura of happiness is created which fascinates all who approach within its radius.

If we are, unconsciously, already such magicians upon a small scale, what might we not hope to do, and make of this world, did we all so control

the will, as to decree and produce only good and happiness. By such innocent and delightful magic we become the wielders of natural forces of which, as yet, we know nothing; and find Mother Nature, as she always is, of an inexhaustible fecundity in the production of what we desire shall be produced. She is responsive, however, to evil as to good, for her movements are from one to the other magnetic pole in the moral world—the positive, or negative. We, therefore, have only to be sure that we are upon the *positive side of good*, to harmonise with her in the production of beauty, order, happiness.

Since life on the material plane is all an illusion, as transitory as the representations upon a mimic stage, it would be well for us to prove ourselves of the order of "white magicians," by helping to make these illusory scenes all beautiful from the wise action of wills in harmony with nature on the side of good. Thus should we steadily evolve those higher divine principles wherein alone may permanence be found; and illusions, like the mists which wreathe fantastic shapes about the sun's effulgence, would hold their proper place for the mind which rejoices in the full blaze of a spiritualised intellect.

We should rehabilitate the ancient term "magic," and restore to it the old honours with which it was invested. Then no more will it present to our minds only ideas of horrible things; but the beauty of a science which proves the possession and *lawful* exercise of psychic powers, the highest possible to man, and entitles him to rank amongst those Kings and Priests of Nature

whom the ancients styled "the gods." Such transcendent powers are the heritage of the spiritual man, who has attained his majority in evolution, and who enters into them as his rightful possession. This is to be a "Son of God"—and such is the proper signification of those words: a state by no means easy of attainment, since it denotes the complete subjugation of the lower animal principles in man; and that the being so distinguished has ascended into the final state of all, wherein he must necessarily disappear sooner or later from the observation and knowledge of mankind on earth; and wherefrom he can no more return except as an Avatar to minister to lower brethren.

Some of the ablest pens on earth are employed in the exposition of the *true* spiritual science, and those religious teachings which are incorporated with it; whilst others of equal power and brilliancy amuse themselves coquetting with the fantastic shadows cast by the lurid glare of the unlawful art called "Black Magic"—the parent of witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy. Whilst the grand, spiritually-uplifting science is being slowly unfolded as the mind of man becomes able to receive it, the false, degrading perversion, which has been, during ages of the world's history, the ruin of all who have pursued it, is obtruding its misshapen presence into the company of the unthinking and frivolous, whose minds, *évaporées* by a life of worldliness, seize upon it as a new stimulus to thought and idle speculation, which can lead nowhere. In the midst, however, of the glamour cast by the weird spells of the black

betrayer, a ray from the divine science frequently lights up some hitherto unperceived psychic power possessed by man, and reveals the immortal truth behind it—that man *has a soul*, whose nature, better known to the ancients than to ourselves, has to be learned anew by this materialistic age.

Men will soon learn to discriminate between black and white magic, and whilst noting the fitful glare of the false and unclean, will cease to be fascinated by what it offers to the lower nature; or lured into its pit of destruction. The chosen theme of poet, painter, and novelist, it now rivets universal attention,—the black shadow cast upon the plane of objective life, by the brilliancy of a light unseen by the material eye. When the film of flesh is withdrawn from the eyes of the Soul, the shadow will disappear.

London, 1889.

THE ASTRAL LIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

The Astral Light: its character, powers, effects; its universality as an Agent.

THE majority of mankind are in a state of complete ignorance as regards the existence of an element inseparable from, and indispensable to, life, which passes under the modern appellation of the "astral light." This element, atmosphere, ether—call it as we may—belongs to the department of occult physics, and, for that reason, to the world at large would seem a mythical *something*, whose appellation would convey to their minds no conception or idea upon which to found any substantial knowledge, or ground whereupon to rest aught but dreams.

Although belonging more especially to the realm of soul, it is, nevertheless, as substantial a reality as the atmospheric air we breathe, and may enter into the consideration of life with as fair a chance of being understood and realised as any subject of study belonging to the realm of the body—the material plane. In short, the time has arrived for man to take a firm mental grasp

of things spiritual, of things usually relegated to the land of dreams, of insubstantial visions, and imaginary appearances, with which a man has commonly nothing to do—so he thinks—except when he gives wings to his fancy, and floats away into a world that, after all, has for him a very hypothetical existence. But this world of ungraspable dimensions, of dreamy scenery, and uncertain formation—to some minds a black void, of which it is a folly to affirm anything that thought can conceive ; to others a nameless space, filled with vapours, incomprehensible and formless—this world is the real substantial world of metaphysics, whilst the gross world of matter is the world of illusions, of impermanency, of unreality.

It requires an education of some continuance to enable the mind of man, at its present stage of evolution, to realise the existence of an additional but finer world of sentience than the one he corporeally inhabits. Anyone who would strive to place this new subject of experience within his grasp, is esteemed a dreamer of dreams, a visionary mystic, who deals with what he cannot possibly *know*, although he may think he does.

It is possible, however, for certain well-ascertained facts relating to that next, nearest stage of conscious intelligent existence to be set forth to the comprehension of all men, in as logical and tangible a form as the facts of any other science, wherein the most material mind will find a basis to rest upon as solid as the earth itself. In truth, the two worlds of mind and matter are so interblended as to be inseparable in reality,

and it is only requisite for them to become inalienably so *in our thought*, for us to feel at once launched upon a new field of experience and knowledge, without which we should soon begin to realize that education would be lamentably incomplete.

To possess a true conception of that inner, ambient, and penetrative atmosphere called the "astral light," is an indispensable requisite in the study of spiritual or occult science. Without a knowledge of this wonderful agent of all life, material as well as psychical, the student will find himself at sea without chart or compass when he endeavours to deal with spiritual facts. He will find also that to rightly conceive of the functions performed by this mysterious element in the life of man, in the life of every creature or object in the universe, in the very processes of thought, and in the creation of this world,—will throw a wonderful light upon his mind, explaining many problems, and effecting a complete revolution in his ideas concerning the world and everything that exists. Therefore, the existence of this essential element of elements—for it contains all elements in itself—is a subject all minds should realize and know for a fact as certain as that we live and breathe in an atmosphere, and that without air we die.

Modern physicists already begin to conceive the existence of this inner atmosphere, calling it "luminiferous ether," "latent light," "radiant matter," etc. To ancient alchemists it was well known under the name of *Azoth*, *Anima Mundi*, etc. They thoroughly understood its marvellous

functions and potencies in the structure of the world, and in the life of man, and had obtained over it the mastery of intelligence and will, using it in the production of thaumaturgical and magical effects, and learning how to resist and quell its malefic properties

In his "*Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*," Eliphas Levi dwells at length upon the infinite potencies of this agent of universal life. He says of the astral light that it is "an element; an inner, ambient, penetrative atmosphere; a luminous, etheric substance; a natural agent of infinite potency,"—as necessary to the psychic life of man as atmospheric air is to his physical life. It may be said to be the foundation of his very being, the matrix from which he sprang, or was evolved; that divine afflatus, or Breath, proceeding from the fountain of all Being, which is the breath of life of creatures; the ocean of divine magnetism, the Aura of God, in which float the Deific thoughts which become embodied in worlds.

The *Secret Doctrine*, says: "It is the life-principle of every living creature, and furnishes the astral soul, the fluidic *perisprit* to man, animals, fowls of the air, and everything living."

From a condition of inconceivable, transcendent purity, this luminous, fluidic substance becomes modified, thicker and coarser as it proceeds outwards from its central fountain, until finally reaching the ultimate stage of matter, it is the grosser element which serves for human and earthly lives.

The astral light has been called the "Body of the Holy Ghost"—a most appropriate and ex-

pressive designation, for by and through its agency is conveyed to man all beneficent grace from on high, and every purifying, elevating, and saving aid.

This ethereal atmosphere, of which atmospheric air is the outer robing, or vehicle, has its currents, its positive and negative poles. It holds in its bosom electric and magnetic forces, and the germs of every conceivable substance, form or body. They are there held "in *potentia* but not in *actu*." From it is produced everything that exists, of which the first idea conceived in Divine Mind proceeds outwards, investing itself in gradually thickening substances, until it reaches the stage of dense matter and becomes an object for the physical senses.

"The Kabalists"—says Eliphas Levi—"compare spirit to a substance which remains fluid in its divine centre, and under the influence of essential light; but of which the external becomes hardened like wax exposed to the air in the colder regions of visible forms. These *shells*, or petrified envelopes (more properly speaking *carnified*), are the cause of errors or evil, which bears relation to the heaviness and hardness of the animated envelopes. In the book of Zohar, the perverse spirits, or evil demons, are not spoken of otherwise than as 'shells'—*cortices*."

By the *senses of the soul* we become cognisant of this inner atmosphere. Transcending its material envelope by its inherent self-refining power, or by the temporary aid of the mesmerist, the soul *sees*, *hears*, and *feels*, in this sublimated ether, things above the earth, and veiled from the

bodily senses of its inhabitants. The body also sympathises by physical sensations; but the unspiritualised mind can offer no explanation of these sensations. In moments of intense excitement the forceful energy of this life-current courses from nerve to nerve like electric flames. Its vital forces stir the very foundations of one's being; paralyzing the body with an icy cold, or filling it with a fiery energy by which it is nerved to the performance of superhuman deeds.

As previously stated, this invisible ether becomes of a grosser consistency as it approaches the ultimate plane of matter. Ascending, it becomes more and more sublimated, or spiritualized, until it is merged in the *Akasa*, a purer, more transcendent substance adapted to the existence of higher beings than men on earth.

"The Astral Light, or Anima Mundi—says the *Secret Doctrine*, is dual, and bi-sexual. The (ideal) male part of it is purely divine and spiritual, it is the Wisdom, it is Spirit or *Purusha;* while the female portion (the Spiritus of the Nazarenes) is tainted, in one sense, with matter, *is* indeed matter, and therefore evil already."

Again—"The Soul of the Astral Light is divine, and its body (the light waves on the lower planes) infernal. This Light is symbolized by the Magic Head in the *Zohar*, the double face on the double Pyramid; the black pyramid rising against a pure white ground, with a *white head and face within its black triangle;* the white pyramid inverted—the reflection of the first in the dark waters, showing the *black reflection of the white face.* This is the 'Astral Light,' for

Demon est Deus inversus." (*Secret Doctrine*, p. 424).

It must be borne in mind that to *ascend*, in a spiritual sense, is to withdraw oneself from the *outward* to the *inward:* for the "spirit" is *within*, and a man who becomes more spiritual in thought and aspiration, mentally leaves the external plane of the visible world, and rises into the invisible spiritual region of the soul's life. Each region has its appropriate atmosphere; the body breathing in one, the soul in the other. Within higher, more spiritual regions still, inconceivable to man, the angels breathe.

All souls have their being in this "soul of the world"—receiving it, and giving it forth in the form of *auras:* and, by will-force, concentrating, modifying, and projecting it, with more or less intensity, for good or evil. Being modifiable by the will of man, he alone has the power of vitiating it and rendering it unwholesome. He receives and wields it unconsciously. Whilst the very life of his being, it becomes also the agent, or servant of his will; whence it may become the vitiated and poisoned aura of a perverted will, producing disease and death; or the beneficent, delightful emanation of a purified will, working in harmony with God and Divine Nature —an emanation of health, happiness, and peace.

"The respiration of the Soul" [*Dogme et Rituel*]—"produces around it a radiation of which it is the centre. It surrounds itself by the reflections of its life-deeds, and its inner thoughts, whether confirmed in act or not, which make for it a heaven or a hell. There can be no solitary, or

hidden actions; all that we really *will to do* remains written in the astral light, in which are preserved the reflections of our mental or psychic life, which we may, or may not, objectivate into the physical life by acts. Those astral reflections continually influence our thoughts by the interposition of the imagination's translucence. This diaphanous faculty of the mind seizes upon images in the astral light, and presents them in a mirrored transparency to thought, holding them by command of the will for longer or shorter periods. The imagination is the "eye of the soul," and by it man perceives the form of his thought-creations, which it also aids him to create. Its vision, directed by the will, explores the astral light, and reflects the thought-images of other minds, as well as the phantom shapes inhabiting the adjacent world of the disembodied. It is by the *imagination* that the will is exalted or debased; and by it that the will has power over the astral light, to make it yield up its imaged reflections. The imagination is the "eye of the soul" and the "wand of the magician."

Man thus lives in two lights: the outer, or material, in which are seen all the objects of the physical universe; and the inner, or astral, in which, by the soul's vision, he may behold objects of the ethereal next world—or world of soul. He is already conscious of inward living in this world, which he fashions and fills for himself, falsely or truly, as his nature or knowledge may direct; but he does not reflect upon this fact in an enlightened manner; for the generality of men are ignorant as to the nature of soul, or of mind.

In the gross selfishness of a personality which is usually merged in earthly things alone, men deem themselves securely locked up in a non-committal egoism, which they fondly fancy is impenetrable to other minds. Yet by a marvellous insight, minds are continually sensing the secrets of other minds. This arises from the fact that souls emanate themselves in the form of auras, in whose transparence their every thought is recorded. And because the soul thus forms its own breath-sphere within the astral light, neighbouring souls intuitively perceive the electro-magnetic vibrations of this sphere; receiving the effluence of beauty and sweetness proceeding from good thoughts, or the effluvium proceeding from bad thoughts; the unclean, feverish heat given out by thoughts of hatred or lust; or the bland, soothing, or exhilarating glow of that pure magnetism radiated by a love of human kind, cleansed of earthliness and self.

If man harmonises his being with beneficent nature by a life of good, his soul radiates through the tissues of his body, a healing vital magnetism called OD. If his life be evil, a poisonous magnetism is expelled, termed OB. There is also a third property of human magnetism termed AUR, holding a middle place between these two, which has an equilibrising effect, attracting or repelling according to the dictates of reason. "OD radiates; OB absorbs; AUR regulates or balances; OD is light; OB darkness; AUR twilight; OD is the breath of angels; OB the inhalation of demons; AUR the atmosphere of the sages; OD illuminates the minds of the

prophets; OB produces the intoxication of the Pythonesses; and *somnambules* become lucid, or tell falsehoods according as they have been mesmerized through OD or OB. Paracelsus gives the name of *ebriecatum*, or artificial intoxication, to the states of frenzy produced through OB." (Eliphas Levi).

"In the Hebrew text the word AUR is translated by *light.* It is active under the name of OD; passive under that of OB. The OD is the perceptible radiant light; the OB the absorbent and latent light. This latent light is admitted by modern physicists."—E.L.

Within this "soul of the world" everything that exists, *is;* therefrom is produced or objectivated, and thereto returns when the physical embodiment is destroyed. When the creatures of the visible world are said to "die," their psychical principles, or *souls*, pass into this inner atmosphere; and the material substances which formed their *bodies* pass through chemical changes on the material plane called *decay.* When fire is extinguished, it merely disappears into the astral light, and from that universal agent inherent in every material body, it may again be brought forth in visible flames. When we blow out a candle, we drive the light back into the bosom of its mother-procreant light. When we destroy life, as we say, we send the soul back into this causal, invisible world, where it floats in phantom form, *still existing* upon another, more spiritual plane, until such time as it may re-attract to itself the atoms which will furnish for it a new physical body. If it be a human soul, it follows out such

processes of change as are essential in its gradual ascension to the home of rest it may have earned by its life in the body. There is no death: what we call death is merely a change of condition.

Nature is the expression of Divine Mind, or thought; and "Soul" is the innate *mode* of life of every object in the universe. The trees and flowers have souls which *feel*, but which have no other sensation of life. The *senses* of life, *i.e.*, consciousness of sense-powers, or faculties, are gradually evolved through the lower kingdoms of nature, in higher and higher forms of existence, until man is reached. All the processes of evolution tend to the human form, which is the basic idea potential in every form.

When the grade of man is reached, he becomes the highest plane of material life, from which it is nature's constant effort to evolve the higher spiritual or divine man, whose ultimate destiny, when liberated from the "wheel of lives," is the bosom of God, whence he returns no more to earths, or external nature. Nevertheless, worlds continue to be created,—that is, to emanate from the divine mind, whose thought becomes objectivated in external forms, or manifestations. "An idea," says Plutarch, "is a *being* incorporeal, which has no subsistence by itself, but gives figure and form unto shapeless matter, and *becomes the cause of the manifestation.*"

Eternal life is ever seen in forms (or creation), which assumes higher and higher modes of expression: leaving the material plane with beings qualified to ascend, and unfolding itself, to the sublimated senses they have evolved, in beauty

to us inconceivable. Ever higher and higher, until purified man—from microcosmic, become macrocosmic—knows all things, and is at the heart and centre of the universe—of life eternal.

Enveloped in the limitless ocean of the Akasa, astral light, or soul-substance of the world, man breathes it psychically by his thought, or mental life. "The soul attracts or *in*-spires from the astral light what it believes to be happiness; and *re*-spires, or gives out, the ideas which result from its innate sensations, or emotions. Diseased or vicious souls emit a poisonous breath, and vitiate the astral atmospheres; that is, they mingle with the astral light which *penetrates* them, impure reflections, and establish magnetic currents deleterious to life. Man thus depraves the astral light, which is the agent of his will: a force, blind of itself, which is subordinated to all wills, for evil or for good. Identifying itself with the innate life of every being it animates, it lends itself to evil as to good; and it is from this property of sympathetic assimilation that it may be divided without confusion; that its force may be directed from either pole, or repose in the perfect equilibration of the fixed and permanent" (or the wise and reasonable). "The astral light becomes the realisation or form of *intellectual* light, as this last becomes, in the perfect man, the realisation or form of *divine* light. By every intelligent effort of will, man projects his *fluide*, or substance, which may be termed his *human light;* and herein a distinction must be drawn between the human light and the astral light. The "human light" is characterised by OD or OB; OB being dark-

ness, and emanating from ignorance, or vice, is fatal: poisoned by it, man is like a serpent which stings itself to death."

"The astral light, becoming transformed into human light at the moment of conception, is the first envelope of the soul, and combining itself with more subtle fluidic substances, it forms the ethereal body, or the sidereal phantom, of which Paracelsus speaks in his *Philosophia Sagax.* This sidereal body, when disengaged at death, attracts and preserves, for a longer or shorter period, by a law of sympathetic attraction, the reflections of its past life. If a powerfully sympathetic will draws it into a certain current, it will manifest naturally. It is by this means apparitions are produced, or that the astral body sometimes appears visibly in certain localities when the thought, will, or affection is there fixed, whilst the physical body may be far distant. The will may compel the appearance of these 'phantoms,' or sidereal bodies, who bring with them their own reflections in the astral light; which are thus submitted to our translucence (*diaphane*). This explains all visions, and shows, above all, why the dead appear to *clairvoyantes* as they *were on earth*, or as they are in the *intermediate* condition, but never as they appear *in an existence which escapes the perceptions of our actual organism.*" (Eliphas Levi.)

As the astral light blindly obeys impulsions given it from certain centres, it follows that men surround themselves with the effects of their inner lives in auras potential for health and happiness, or disease and wretchedness. As the

microcosm, man possesses it as the protean agent of all power in himself. Made free in will, he may constitute himself—*as the microcosm*—the opposite to all that is divine, and become a *devil*, his world a hell, thus transforming the astral light, his ambient, fluidic soul-substance, into a poison, which must eventually culminate in his own destruction. Or, on the other hand, he may elevate his will into harmony with the divine will, when his world will be a heaven, his astral emanations, health ; and his soul, linked eternally with God, will become immortal. From such a foundation, made consonant by the will of man with all the beneficent laws of nature, she (the Divine mother) evolves the *spiritual man*, whose world in process of gradual evolution with himself, would assume an ethereal beauty exactly harmonising with the perfected entity inhabiting it.

With his own spiritual beauty grows the beauty and perfection of his material home, by the inevitable laws of attraction and homogeneity, which harmonise all things. The will eliminates what is objectionable, and retains what is suitable and gives satisfaction. The will is the law in human life, for evil or for good. Each man becomes a kind of small god, the centre of a little world of his own creation, which he makes hideous or beautiful according to the character of his will. His power, it is true, is limited to a small circle, of which he is the centre ; but leave him undisturbed in the world he chooses to make for himself, and there need be, *for him*, no god but himself—an arbitrary power which may

be demoniac, if the will, blinded by ignorance, becomes perverted. It is then a perishable power, bearing in its very vitals the self-engendered seeds of destruction.

But such is the condition of the great majority of men on this earth at present. They are self-constituted the *opposite* to God, of whom they know nothing, for by false religious teachings, which have established a permanent mental atmosphere of darkness, it is impossible for *ordinary* minds to transcend—men have formed the most false conceptions of God. He is a power the great majority do not understand, and with which they find it impossible to harmonise their will. Consequently all, *for them*, is disorder and destruction. Their brief joys are, as it were, snatched from the jaws of an inexorable fate, and they live in a state of worldly, sensual enjoyment, which, did they regard the teachings of ecclesiastical preceptors, *must* be in utter defiance of the will of God. They thus lead lives of tacit hypocrisy, or open defiance. What matters it to them? The world—society—is a law unto itself. It forms one aspect of the microcosm. It is the "black reflection of the white face" in the "dark waters" of the Cosmos. It has poisoned the astral light, thus *making* its "infernal body," as "The Secret Doctrine" calls it; the opposite to that "body of the Holy Ghost," which is a most apposite designation of the astral light in its higher, purer aspects. In spiritual science we deal with opposites—the positive and negative poles of substances. If it is not one it is the other, and life vibrates between the two.

Mankind on earth live in the *vitiated* astral light, which *they* vitiate, and humanity thus becomes the "Demon est Deus inversus." Filling the astral light with his impure reflections, man has peopled the inner world with phantoms of evil, *embodied ideas*, which form the *seductions* of the astral light, and have power to tempt others to destruction.

Let each man then try to rise above this "infernal body," *le plus tôt possible*, by embodying in his life and daily actions the highest conceptions he can form of a *divine nature*, and he will gradually harmonise his will with the divine will; will cease to project impure reflections upon the astral light; and will aid in advancing that transformation which awaits the world in the lapse of ages.

It is because of the widespread poisoning of the astral light, by the almost universal perversion of human wills, that disease, deformity, insanity, fanaticisms, or false enthusiasms which propel to destruction, mental stagnation, and apathy; every human ugliness, every taint and poison-spot destructive of life and happiness, reign in the world. The earth is invested with death-dealing powers; and rolls wrapt in a dense malarial aura, in which float the germs of disease, which fasten even upon the vegetable kingdom in the shape of rot, blight, insects, or worms. The man-poisoned "elemental" or *nature-spirit* forces, culminate in objective forms of ugliness and disorder, and from the causal world are projected into the material world, wheresoever conditions invite or compel the manifestation.

Thus works the will of the demon-god who reigns over earth; who opposes his finite will to the divine will, partially twisting and subjugating nature by the reversal of astral currents from the divine designs, to demoniac conditions and incidents, by which physical life is poisoned as by the breath of hell, and the soul-life becomes deformed, sometimes destroyed.

The earth, man's home, the scene of all his turbulent, insane, selfish, suicidal deeds, pushed from her legitimate course of co-operation with beneficent nature, groans in a sore travail to right herself; and ever and anon, by some huge convulsive leap of her revolting forces, endeavours to regain a state more consonant with the divine laws which constantly thrill through her soul. Thus the earth throws off the surplus of evil brought upon her by her ignorant master—MAN.

The earth owes her present condition of disease and deathliness to her human inhabitants who, not having yet learned to live in harmony with *divine* nature, concentrate in terrible malignity, blackness, and stifling intensity, the astral currents which they have turned from their legitimate course, and heap them up, coil upon coil, circle upon circle, like the suffocating folds of a boa-constrictor, wherein perish not human bodies merely, but *human souls.*

On the other hand, there have always been on earth souls in advanced stages of spiritual evolution, living in harmony of will with God; who have been the open doors through which diviner auras have passed out to earth from the higher, purer, *akasic* regions. Hence demoniac man has

not yet succeeded in utterly destroying the possibility of human life on earth. But there arrive certain periods when great natural cataclysms cleanse and purify the astral light: and there also arrives a time when the human failures, which are not "fitted to survive," pass into a world of "outer darkness" corresponding to their spiritual darkness, wherein they perish miserably —the earth being for ever rid of their diabolical, poisonous auras.

The two poles good and evil, matter and spirit, are ever attracting and repelling in the moral world; whilst nature, guided by divine mind, is ever seeking to establish an equilibrium of safety by the enlightened *spiritualised* intellect of man, which becomes illumined by the same wisdom that regulates her own grand and magnificent movements.

Such beautiful minds—the spiritualised—create about them as perfect a heaven as it is possible to produce on this planet, where collective humanity is in a state of terrific struggle to evolve the spiritual soul, rendered absolutely essential in the grand procession of the cosmic forces towards eternal life—or eternal death—that is to say, by *the will of God*. To oppose oneself to that majestic current is to rush upon death, into the very jaws of Cerberus. But such is the course of the *perverted will* which sets up its own puny current of astral forces.

The whole universe floats in the current of God's will. Those things which we look upon as soulless, or lifeless—the innumerable objects which make up the world we see, change their

states or conditions according to the ceaseless, silent action of that will. All is borne onwards perpetually; in unceasing change; nothing is ever stationary, for it is life, growth, evolution, eternal progress. It is Nature acted upon by Spirit, which is perpetually carrying all things of the material plane of life around again to become *pure* Spirit. But man is the embodiment of an independent will-force, self-constituted, and self-maintained, from ignorance. So he creates a world for himself, upon the insignificant plane of existence he inhabits during the short span of his earth-life. He alone can turn the currents of the astral light, which is given to him as his *breath of life*, aside from their majestic onward course in harmony with the silent Will of God.

CHAPTER II.

Man's responsibility for his own salvation the law of his existence since the evolution of his reason. The gradual change in the condition and purity of the Astral Light from the presence of sin in the world.

In the first stages of his evolution, as he emerged step by step out of the mere animal-human mind into the possession and exercise of the higher intellectual faculties, man was not able to discriminate between good and evil, and could not exercise the power of choice upon the moral plane. The creature of animal impulse, non-reflecting, non-reasoning, necessity was his law, and he could not be held responsible for the choice of a reasoning will when he did not possess one. There could then be no question of immortality for such a merely rudimentary being, any more than there is for the lower creatures, for these are but the steps nature makes towards her grand *ultimatum*, the evolution of the divine man, who alone achieves immortality. This condition has to be worked out by evolution—by man's co-operation with nature to bring out the highest—and it is only when "Spirit" has become *individualised* in man that it becomes a certainty. When man has liberated himself from the thralls of matter, and the seductive influences of the lower principles of his nature, he has worked himself up to the point of immortality.

[This theory would imply the frequent return upon the objective or physical plane of the same human Monad, in the processes of that evolution towards the highest, which cannot be reached in

one physical existence—the thread of continuity, through all the appearances in material form, remaining intact upon the astral or psychical plane of existence. Somewhat similarly to the *species* of plants being preserved in the *seeds;* wherein are potentially contained every stem, leaf, petal, and even perfumed aroma appertaining to the perfect plant yet to be evolved: the *seeds* forming the link of continuity between the various appearances of the same plant, differing only in the transitory circumstances attending the repeated evolutionary stages it passes through.]

Experience is the forcing-house of reason, and by the vicissitudes of painful experience as to the consequences of evil, did man's reason grow. Then by degrees that instinct which served him for protection when he lay more completely an infant in the arms of nature, began to recede, to grow dimmer, less spontaneous; for reason, proud in its essence of self-hood, demanded a sway that would accept of nought which did not present to the mind a satisfactory "why" and "wherefore." Then disappeared the innocence of ignorance, and man elected to know evil—or exercised his will in seeking the gratification of the animal senses, bending all things before the demands of the self-hood, which thenceforth became the one supreme good. Thus life grew subject to his will; he was self-constituted the sole arbiter of his daily existence—and necessarily so, since from within himself, like a hidden germ pressing forward to its birth, reposed, in the darkness of the unknown—*i.e.* non-evolution—that glorious divine arbiter, a will, acting in

consonance and harmony with God, from the ratiocinations of a *spiritualised* reason.

In the instinctive infancy of the human race, the astral currents flowed harmoniously with nature, and a gentle, if merely animal peace, innocent joy and content, pervaded the mental atmospheres; for, as yet, no opposing will-forces, actuated by self-love, disturbed their serenity. Disease was unknown, for animal man, although the victim of vicissitudes, was instinctively self-protective, as well as self-supporting, in the proper selection of all conducive to well-being of body, as are his precursors upon the lower animal plane, who draw from nature's bosom, as infants from the mother's breast, all that is requisite to life. But accident was not unknown, nor the mischances of weather and climate, nor the consequences of ignorant self-exposure to danger. The sight of death, the experience of suffering, the birth of emotions of dread and anxiety, were essential requisites to the growth of reason and the human intellect. Apace with the knowledge of the more immediate causes of suffering grew selfishness; the desire to avert from the one supreme centre all suffering, and to draw towards it all pleasure and delight. Hence selfish contention arose, the ebullitions of despotic, enraged wills, like the bubbling up of hot and smoking *geysers*.

From the reversal of the serene flow of astral currents thus caused, necessarily ensued uneasiness, distress, straitness, irritation, etc.; the excitation of contradictory wills, the employment of greater force for the accomplishment of arbi-

trary desire—injustice, cruelty, hatred, murder. Henceforward evil wills destroyed the purity and wholesomeness of the atmosphere of souls, and disease had its birth ; malaria and contagion filled the physical or material atmosphere, and the horrors of a forcible ejection of souls from bodies became known to mankind. Equal to which, if not surpassing them, were the horrors of the long imprisonment of souls in diseased, maimed, and deformed bodies, physical diseases and deformities being the outward symbols or *effects* of moral disorders. No human being ever projects into the astral light the dynamic force of a perverted will in thought or act who does not set up an astral current contrary to well-being. It destroys health-conditions for his own soul and body, and that of others. By repeated action it intensifies itself and becomes a contagious atmosphere, which acts like a magnetic spell upon weak or negative souls coming within the radius of its influence. Ere long, bodies partaking of the unhealthy conditions of the soul begin to exhibit correspondential types of disease. All diseases have a spiritual origin, and a man may often read his own moral obliquity of thought, of habit, or of deed, in his physical ailments. At the same time, diseased astral atmospheres have been so accumulated by the perversions of the human race, that even the innocent, the pure, and moral living, take on the contagion of physical diseases, and fall victims to the general state of infection. It is a legacy of evil from humanity to humanity, to be gradually worked off through centuries of suffering. The

planet never escapes from these accumulated atmospheres of evil—a sort of normal moral condition, fixed and permanent, and, therefore, falling under the action of law. For this reason diseases have their seasons, their periods of re-excitement, when they rage as devastating epidemics. It is the condition of physical health for collective humanity, which is, after all, like one body, animated by one soul, and if one member be diseased the whole body must suffer. This general condition is swayed by laws acting as regularly as the recurrence of the tides, the seasons of the year, or the coming of storms. It will continue to be so until spiritually-enlightened humanity has by progress in knowledge, therapeutic science, and, above all, spiritual purity of life, worked off the effects of its grim legacy—a curse handed down from generation to generation. When the last debt of ignorance is paid off, disease will disappear.

Wherever simple innocence reigns, there also reign peace, happiness, health, content, satisfaction. It is this condition of harmony with nature which renders the pure and innocent aura of children so delightful: which makes the presence of all unsophisticated beings, or those who try to lead a pure life, produce a feeling of peace and restfulness. In the solitudes of nature, when our inmost being is in harmony with her, we experience, perhaps, the deepest sense of this exquisite happiness of serene astral currents. The soul is cheered; all harshness, arising from the daily struggles of life, becomes subdued to a gentle half-melancholy yearning, which lifts the

thoughts, by aspiration, to that final rest awaiting the wise.

Man may be said to be the creator, on the lower plane, of his own world; for life lends itself in every respect to the moulding power of his will. He may kill himself absolutely, soul as well as body, if he wills so to do. There are commands, precepts, enough to deter him; but if he chooses to reject all, if he wills to follow his own leading, he is absolute master of himself, and may place himself in opposition to that magnetic attraction which draws us all to heaven, and may thereby compass the death of his own soul. Rejected of nature, he then passes out upon the current of destruction.

The thought-substance of the universe, *i.e.*, the astral light, which obeys all wills, man must absolutely mould to his desires—for he is not otherwise constituted. It is the enfolding aura, the infilling life of his being, and becomes transformed in self-emanation: as his *breath* may become poisoned, or healthy, according to his corporeal condition. Ignorant and vicious, he moulds it to his destruction: enlightened and spiritually perfect, he clothes himself with it as with the garment of a god, and sways it in the beneficence of perfect love and wisdom.

Proceeding out from the divine centre, in supreme purity, the astral light* holds in itself conceptions of the sublimest grandeur. Immediately surrounding planets, it becomes changed to a reflective and absorbent medium, wherein

* Upon this high plane, however, it would be more correctly termed the "*Akasa*."

appear the deformed, grotesque inversions of truth, which are superstitions, fanaticisms, hallucinations, delusions; the delirious phantasmagoria produced from minds upon the plane of perishable mortality. As souls, from lessons of experience, attain the power of choosing with enlightened will the highest spiritual good, they pierce through this denser mental atmosphere, and ascend into regions of clearer light, where the mind draws in rarer, more ethereal, divine thought-substance.

What feeds the soul more deliciously than the high, pure thoughts of the good and great, given forth either by eloquent speech or by printed words of prose or poetry? Who possesses a more supreme and irresistible power of drawing all men after him than the poet, whose soul has gained its immortal wings by repeated efforts (in all probability through many earth-lives), to shake the dust of earth from his feet, and rise into communion with the divine mind which originated all that beauty he clothes in the music of his verse? His soul bears the stamp of divinity, and we behold it in the sublime and lovely thoughts he pours forth in words for the uplifting of humanity. His soul spontaneously emanates loveliness, as a flower breathes forth perfume. No one can deny that it is the beauty of thought makes the beauty of the world: and *genius*, or those great minds that have *received the divine breath*, is the only earthly power that can lift humanity, if ever so briefly, out of itself, above the earth, into sublimer regions of existence. Whether poet, orator, musician, painter, or writer, these great minds of the earth, risen into higher

regions of the astral light, are the only instruments for transmitting to men the effulgence from on high, whose slightest contact, like lightning conducted from the empyrean, as it penetrates our thought-sphere, electrifies us with new life. He is a pitiable being who can feel nought of this. He is not in accord with the harmonies of heaven, although he may by evolution, sooner or later, work up to that condition of soul. It is by the working out of the highest ideal enshrined within himself that man establishes an indissoluble link with divine spirit, which thereafter flows unchecked to the very lowest principles which the soul may still retain; whence the whole nature gradually becomes changed, and man attains immortality. Divine spirit having thus gained foothold in the human entity, the progress is thenceforward towards God. The will begins to be exercised entirely in accordance with the highest wisdom: in other words, co-operates with beneficent nature. The soul breathes in and out, healthful, harmonious astral currents; the will swaying them no longer in opposition to divine law, but in complete accordance therewith. Nature then yields her most exquisite beauty to the conceptions of the finite creator (the *microprosopus*). Under the inspirational influx from higher realms of mind, the purified human entity thence moulds thought-substance into more and more perfect forms, objectivating them as he may find useful; thus increasing the sum total of human happiness, and aiding others to ascend.

There is no good and no beauty upon earth which has not proceeded through and out from

purified, enlightened minds. Every improvement in human life, every invention for increase of comfort and ease, every item of knowledge, every pleasure and happiness, is the emanation of thought through one or more minds, as received by influx from higher regions of cosmic mind :—with infinite variety, increase, and renewal, suiting itself to advancing stages of individual, or race evolution, until the physical world, as known to the inhabitants of each planet, shall have attained the last stage of perfection possible, keeping equal steps with the spiritualisation of mankind.

The ambient aura of human mentality is a most powerfully moulding force, which acts without ceasing. We may truly say that the external aspect of the earth is owing to the mind of man, the collective action of many minds working like one, and throwing out upon external scenes those changes and improvements which gradually transform the outward appearance of things. But besides that, there is an inner, occult, or veiled moulding power which acts like a soul upon a body, silently shaping its external characteristics to a visible expression of the within. Our climates, the configuration of the earth, of land and sea, of mountains, valleys, deserts, the storms, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc., owe their origin occultly to some psychic condition of collective humanity on our planet. Elevate the whole of mankind to the condition of divine spirituality, and the whole earth would be heaven ; all nature harmonious with the beauty and heavenliness of its regenerated inhabitants. Ex-

ternal nature changes with the change of man, and during every cycle of his progress wears an appropriate outer robing. The apparent permanency of things on this earth is an illusion caused by the myopy of our crass materiality, which can see no further than the present short span of decades or centuries.

Ranging itself upon the lower plane, opposite to and in reverse of the Demiurgic Mind, the human mind shapes its own universe of thought-objects, and pours forth emanations by waves of thought, which create misery or bliss. Reversing divine images, which are supremely wise and good, the lower or "little creator," finite through ignorance, transforms good into evil, and floods his mental world with auras of evil, whence proceeds unhappiness. Harmonising himself with the Divine Creator, the Macroprosopus, he reflects the light of wisdom, and good flows through him, filling the lower world with emotions of happiness and exaltation. Minds receive that to which they are affinitised, good or evil, happiness or misery.

CHAPTER III.

Evil an abstract principle until embodied by man. Nature a mirror in which is reflected every stage of evolution, from the lower kingdoms to the higher, which do not exist except in Divine Thought, until they have been evolved: Nature the great Matrix, Mother, Nurse, and Educator of Humanity.

That which flows out from a centre must find, or make, a circumference, or periphery; an opposite, which rings in, enfolds, arrests. From this opposing point would flow back inversion. Nature's constant effort is to rectify inversions; to establish the supremacy of life over death, which is the most extreme circumference, and the most supreme inversion. Along both roads, outwards and inwards, there are innumerable stages, an infinitude of forms, and inexhaustible modes and conditions. Upon them is enacted the drama of life, and the stage is the universe, whose scenes change with the growth of the *monad*. In the monad is the germ of that divine life which is continually being born at different stages of evolution, in new forms, new states, new conditions. Its first appearance in dense matter is in the mineral kingdom, a kind of concrete death. Here, as if to form a foundation of infinite strength, the subtle forces are conglomerate, stationary, inert, locked as in a safe. Liberation ensues in the form of huge convulsions and explosions, wherein the massive masses are shivered, and rent, crumbled, softened. Upon this scene gradually spreads the soft, smiling carpet of vegetable life: the latent, concreted forces expanding gently into growth; taking up

substances and shaping them into new forms, springing from the generative bed wherein they had lain inert. The vegetable kingdom, in its turn, establishes conditions suitable to gross animal life. Throughout, life is continually meeting with death ; but as nature's movements are spiral, things which "die" on the objective plane, separate themselves from the external integuments in which they can no longer live, and return into a condition of more ethereal substance ; returning thus by an upward movement nearer to the central source—thus spiralising the return.

The movement of life is dual, like the swaying of a pendulum, the rising and falling of the lungs—attraction and repulsion. There is a constant battle going on in nature between *momentum* and *inertia*, life and death, good and evil.

Nature presents to us through the lower kingdoms up to the higher, a picture of evolution in its different stages ; and upon each stage, forms and phenomena corresponding to both good and evil, the opposing positive and negative poles, between which life is continually swaying. In the contemplation of nature the enlightened mind sees the whole process of her work, and the laws which regulate her majestic movements.

From the concrete death of the inert mineral bed she evolves the softer beauty of vegetable life. From this plane of non-conscious *blind feeling* alone, she produces sentient activity, in which there is the inception of consciousness carried out, even in the most minute forms, with the intelligence of instinct which has the ap-

pearance of reason and thought. (If there is thought, it is the thought of cosmic mind, which impels according to the form it occupies ; but not the inherent power of thought in a body constructed to give it efficiency). There is always apparent the effort to reach the highest expression of mind ; consequently the animal kingdom gradually rises into the acquisition of thought, but unaccompanied with the light of reason. The minds (if we may call them so) of animals receive impressions from the astral light, and follow blindly its impulses. They respond, doubtless, constantly to the impetus of growth, or evolution into higher states of mental expression, as we do ; with also that voiceless yearning upwards, which we also feel (if we have done nothing to destroy it), when we have a painful sense of a power within us beyond what we can possibly put into expression. The parrot sitting on his perch, and closely watching us with eyes of extraordinary meaning, revolves thought in his small cranium, and is busily laying the foundation for a future stage of evolution in another shape. We cannot form the slightest idea of what animals may suffer from the sense of that peculiar constraint imposed by the physical form they cannot yet transcend. They express by the movement of their bodies, by their apparently unmeaning cries, all they possibly can tell of the limited mental life which sways them. That they have a language, or power of conferring with each other which requires no words, is every day patent to us. They endeavour to talk to us, but we do not always understand their

mute language ; and if we have degraded ourselves by the choice of a life of evil, we become more stupid than they are, and are incapable of perceiving the delicate shades of expression they give voice to.

They obey the impulses of necessity, and of unreasoning desire and emotion, and are unconscious of evil or of good, or of anything but a sense of well-being and happiness, or of discomfort and misery. They are not responsible for any evil they may do or cause, being victims of the blind forces in nature, which frequently exhaust themselves upon the physical plane of their bodies. They are safety valves through which nature gets rid of the evil, destructive forces or energy generated by man. No single noisome, hideous, cruel animal, reptile, or insect, no weed or poisonous plant would be on the earth were it not for the wickedness of mankind. Through these irresponsible forms a dangerous potency or energy exhausts itself in comparative harmlessness. But man has also to return into physical bodies, pick up the effects of the evil Karma he has made in former lives, and work them off by acts of repentance. He works more especially upon the moral plane to exhaust the forces he set in motion, whilst the animals, which presen by correspondence the picture of his evil passions, work upon the physical plane, and aid in maintaining the just equilibrium of forces.

Evil is the inversion of divine good ; and the stage of its action is necessarily upon the lower plane of human life, under the illusions of ignorance, which, again, is the inversion of wisdom.

Man is the first conscious perpetrator of evil. Apart from him it is a merely abstract principle—a thing which may be, but is not, until he embodies it. He gives it life, existence, perpetuity. In nature its hideousness is a reflection thrown upon the mind of man, which alone is capable of discriminating between good and evil—alone is able to voluntarily yield to its seduction; by which he impairs his reason, and loses eventually his power of discrimination. There is a period of evolution for him, when neither is he responsible for certain evil actions, for, like an animal, he, too, is the victim of seductive images in the astral light, and is not consciously discriminative. When choosing it as a mode of life, he becomes the prolific bed for its unfoldment into an infinite variety of forms. The same may be said of good. When man chooses evil no longer, it ceases to exist for him; and if all men chose the same, evil would cease to exist except in the abstract—the always possible.

As soon as man becomes conscious of evil, he becomes responsible. From that moment begins for him the deadly struggle which is to culminate in eternal life or eternal death. He is then a free agent, the arbiter of his own destiny, the creator of his own future. If he aspires to the highest, he will obtain aid from the highest. By *as*piration he will obtain *in*spiration—that intuitive wisdom which will unmistakably point out the path, the way to the highest. If he deaden and stifle conscience—that wonderful prescience of the human soul—that faculty which *proves* an evolution out of the animal ground or foundation;

which is the first glimmering of light from the divine Over-Soul : if he persistently stifle *this*, he may at length destroy it. He thus elects to remain in a state of inversion—to recede from the centre of divine attraction. He immerses himself in gross corruption, becomes dark and hideous, a mass of psychical putrescence ; and ends in total stupor, thence gradual disintegration, and annihilation. He may be ages passing from stage to stage of destruction, but it is inevitable.

Man decrees the failures of nature,—the only failures are in humanity. Such failures drop off the tree of life like diseased or rotten fruit, and end in total decay. But there is nothing of human *soul* left in such a case : it takes flight beforehand, from the already perishing carcase, into the bosom of nature, where it awaits another turn of evolution, when it begins again with another human body. Physical bodies, in the provision of nature, are like the capsules of the seed in which resides *the life*. These personal *shells* are husked off, and enter upon a process of gradual disintegration ; the *lower psychical* principles therein inhering, also returning into cosmic matter, after having lost all self-consciousness.

By the first voluntary step on the downward path, the human entity becomes psychically enwrapt in a coil of reversed astral currents, from which if he be of a passive or negative nature, he will never be able to free himself ; or, on the other hand, if he becomes so intoxicated by the delusions of passion that he loses all freedom of choice. All then that *could* survive

upon the higher plane of existence, recedes, having no foothold upon the lower principles of the personality; which thereafter become more and more bestialised, unhuman, diabolic and deadly; the beginning of eternal death. But what is it passes out? An empty shell. The wreck of nature's attempt to evolve a human soul, *frustrated by a blind, ignorant personal will:* a force set up in opposition to the divine will.

This separation of soul from body,—*i.e.* the soul which *can survive*—sometimes takes place *before* physical death. The poet Dante, in his moments of divine inspiration, may have had glimpses in the astral light of this fact, when he describes the souls of several people in the "Inferno," whose bodies still lived upon earth. Or he may have written from certain teachings of these occult mysteries which have been handed down in the Romish Church. What remains in such cases, carrying on the functions of life, are merely the lower animal principles of a human personality, which still remain in combination. Such beings are usually the most wicked and depraved members of society, in whom there would seem to be a complete decay of all moral sense. They are monsters in human form.

Nature provides, however, almost illimitable chances for her human free agents. The climax for life or death which is reached will depend entirely upon the vestiges, however slight, which may remain in the entity who has entered the path of evil, of capacity to evolve the spiritual soul. The soul which retains the smallest remnant of spiritual life, will take up

again the thread of human existence on the material plane, and begin a process of rejection of evil. It may be a long and painful road, necessitating frequent incarnations, but complete regeneration and salvation will be attained some day. The deeper the pit of evil into which the human entity may sink, the greater the pain and suffering entailed in succeeding lives, and the longer the road of return into harmonious relations with beneficent nature. Transgression of her laws inevitably brings its punishment; and by the poignant sufferings which ensue from actions and modes of life counter to that which is natural or healthy and moral (which is only another word for *mental* health), man is taught what is wrong or evil, and what he ought to avoid doing, if he desires happiness and well-being.

Nature, the great mother, carries man in her bosom, bearing him, *a thought* from God, or *Parabrahm*; and conveying him at length, after his great round is accomplished back again to the fountain-head from which he sprang, a monad destined to become a man-god. And through all the vast, infinite processes of evolution, are held imperishable within the ethereal atmospheres of Mind, (the astral light), the records of lives, by which the mother corrects her offspring by the inevitable laws of retribution, until he makes amends, paying the last farthing of his debt. If Will, perverted and disloyal, lays a burthen upon nature, Will must take it up again, and transform it; reducing it by the hard labour of self-conquest, which also fills up the opposite scale, until equilibrium is re-established.

Man in his ignorance, when misfortune befalls him, considers himself pursued by an evil destiny; when could he but read in the mirror of the astral light, he would learn that his own acts are producing their fruits; that he suffers from retributive justice, and himself created the Nemesis which pursues with a scourge of vipers. He would see

> "The line of all his lives in all the worlds,
> Wherein are packed and scored past thoughts and deeds,
> Strivings and triumphs, memories and marks
> Of lives foregone."

And inevitably must he take up every marred and broken thread, every neglected task, every misapplied opportunity, until the tale be completed, and the cup of sorrow, filled by his own hand, be drained.

But not only is the tale of *individual* sins written in the astral light, but the sins of *nations*, *peoples*, *races*—of the great body of humanity. Nations suffer the consequences of national sins, and of them also are amends demanded. The great Wheel of Lives turns in the current of evolution, bringing up again the corpses of forgotten events, and confronting the living with the ghosts of ancient crimes against the well-being of peoples. For ages is the burthensome legacy being worked off, during which revolutions, riots, massacres, executions, and the upheaval of governments, plunge populations into devastating ruin and wretchedness. Men also seize upon the scourge of retribution, and, turning upon their fellow-men, administer the sharp lessons of that

law they have collectively determined *shall be*, and thus bring the scales of right back again to a proper balance. By their own efforts, by the force of a mighty chain of wills acting in concert, they reverse the current of forces so long flowing in a wrong direction, and set them in a direction conducive to the national well-being—to justice and to right.

There is an evolution of Races keeping pace with that of individuals, and a "wheel of lives" for nations as well as for persons. From the graves of extinct peoples, whose gigantic shadows are left lying upon the earth for ages, in massive ruins crumbling slowly away—from these cold ashes spring up the vigorous new nations which are to pass beyond them in progress, while profiting by the lessons already learned before their arrival on the scene of earthly life. Again does the spiral turn, and again the same apparent height is reached of learning and greatness possessed by preceding nations; but in reality a higher level is attained at each turn.

The ultimate destiny of the human race is high spirituality, beneath which the lower material nature will range itself in complete subordination. At present the lower nature dominates over the majority of mankind, the consequence being extreme psychic deformity; in many cases complete suffocation of the higher nature. Ages upon ages hence mankind will have evolved into a condition which it is impossible for the present inhabitants of earth to conceive. Methods of life will be completely changed. Poverty, disease, suffering will be unknown; for self-love, pride,

arrogance, conceit, and vanity; hatred, envy, malignity in every form, will have burnt themselves out for want of fuel: for the enlightened man will know evil, and eliminate it from his nature. Each man will then be wise from birth; harmonious with divine nature, and therefore, with God, whose manifestation to man nature *is*. Each man will be possessed of spiritual insight; knowledge will be intuitive, illimitable, and therefore inconceivable to our present narrow perceptions. Corresponding to the spirituality of his nature, man will be clothed with a more ethereal body: a flesh refined beyond our conceptions. The atmospheres will be rarefied, purer, presenting no obstacles to the intensely-refined senses. All the productions and appearances of nature will be harmonious to such existences: the whole Earth will be transformed, and of Matter *also* spiritualised.

We cannot do better than quote here a passage from Schöberlein, which for beauty, as well as correctness in the spiritual science it unfolds, cannot be surpassed.

"Jesus spiritualised his inner man, his soul, in its unity of spirit and of nature. Thus, also, He laid the foundation for the transfiguration, the ideal spiritualisation of his body, *inasmuch as the essence of the visible body is grounded in the soul.* This process was an inner hidden one. The hidden reality shone forth only in occasional gleams,—in those miracles of mastery over his body, and over nature, with which the Gospels abound. We emphasise simply the *identity* of the risen with the buried body. The essence of

his body remained the same ; simply the mode of its existence was changed. A fleshly body has become a spiritual body, in which not only the free harmony of the Soul with the inborn Spirit stamps its harmony on the outer features, but also in which the material elements themselves are thoroughly exalted and permeated by the spirituality of the person.

"The peculiar traits of spiritual beauty which occasionally beam out from the persons of ripened believers are actual reflexes of the transfigured corporeity which lies potentially within them. The natural fleshly body is simply the receptacle, the womb, in which the new body is invisibly generated and qualified, up to the hour when, the crude flesh falling away, it shall pass into the heavenly state, and spring forth into its full beauty and actuality."

The man-god Jesus wore a physical body suited to the condition of the earth and its inhabitants, when in the fulness of time he appeared to point out "the way, the truth, and the life." He rose in his spiritual body, whose essence was identical with that of the physical shell already dissipated in the tomb. When the bodies of the Wise—the Magi—the "Sons of God"—"die," they do not pass into corruption, but float away like incense into space. Their atoms are so pure that when the vital energy, the soul-force which held them together is withdrawn, they disappear. But when all mankind shall have evolved the same spiritual beauty and perfection, they will no longer wear bodies of gross matter, which are now a protection to the purified soul against the

horrible conditions of life on the earth, caused by the impure, the sensual, the merely animal man. Those who have prematurely evolved into a higher state and condition, are driven from the haunts of men to live in unapproachable seclusions; or else they "die"—literally poisoned by the odylic emanations of mankind.

To be purified, to feel that one's soul has appropriated to itself, and ethercalised so much of the physical life, that earthly conditions no longer suit it as a residence, is to consciously suffer what is altogether indescribable. Those who have already progressed to a certain stage of spirituality of being will quite understand what it is to experience the effects of an *evil personal magnetism*. To be qualified to feel on a more extended scale the vitiation of the astral light in localities of a radius more or less great, is to realise a new species of misery, to which bodily suffocation from air-poisoning is a mere shadow. But this sort of psychical *malaria* is poured forth in immense volumes by those who live in a condition of crass hebetude of animal self-indulgence. The much-cherished "public-houses" of the great English nation are abysses from whose vile depths hell vomits forth its most destructive auras. The delicate, the refined, the innocent, and purified, are forced to pass in front of the gaping doors which open to let in or out the distressingly-degraded beings who frequent these dens of bestiality. It is impossible to walk in the streets and avoid these numerous vent-holes of moral corruption, whose frequency has become an unbearable nuisance to those who are

refined above the level of their unfortunate brethren, who still wallow in animality.

All such things—the concentrations of vile auras from homogeneous assemblages of the depraved—must pass away from the earth—refined away by the elevating influence of man's *spiritualised* intellect.

CHAPTER IV.

Evil of life impossible when the Soul, endowed with spiritual prescience, clear-seeing of causes and effects, knows beforehand the consequences of evil. Human life having attained this stage of evolution, evil is left upon the earth like the *exuviæ* of winged insects risen into the upper air. From the removal or dissipation of vitiated auras, the astral light becomes clearer, and restored to its normal placidity, serenity, and buoyancy.

Experience teaches us that as a man learns the consequences of evil he begins, if he be a wise man, to reject it, to fight against the propensity thereunto of his lower nature. It is true that much suffering usually brings him to this state of mind; but when he has experienced the full bitterness of the doom he brings upon himself, the conviction of his folly becomes fixed and unalterable. The old blind self-hood stands convicted of stupid ignorance, is condemned and executed, for the man destroys *so much* of it; he rejects it, peels it off, as it were, like a skin, and it dies. He rises from that, renewed and regenerated.

It often happens that this conviction reaches a man on the bed of death, and there being no other means of putting into practice the higher resolutions he then forms, the necessities of his spiritual evolution compel his return into another body, when ensues a long struggle against the evil tendencies established in the preceding life. It also sometimes happens that a man's life is cut off ere he has exhausted the full current of evil he sets in motion, when he returns into a body to heap sin upon sin, until he reaches the

culmination, at which point it inevitably falls back upon himself, crushing him utterly. Then will he taste the full bitterness of his cup and profit by his experience.

As individuals accomplish this work of self-restoration, so do nations. It follows, therefore, that the whole human race must eventually reach that point when they will cease to do evil in any way; when they will have exhausted the power of the passions to lure or deceive; when they will realise the painful effects of even a wrong thought, and will not endure it in themselves or in others. This would bring about over the whole earth that state which is sought to be represented under the name of "The Millennium"; a term bandied from lip to lip without the slightest comprehension of all that may be comprised under its signification. It is supposed it will come to pass in some mysterious, miraculous way—a sort of visible descent from heaven—when it is in reality a condition of material existence which must be worked out by each man individually for himself, and by collective humanity in societies, nations, races. It is a kind of earthly *Nirvana*—a state of total rest after long labour, with all the enjoyments, high intellectual and spiritual delights of existence, which have been honestly earned.

When that blissful period arrives, the earth will be in her old age. Her children will have grown so independent of her, that they will require a new earth to satisfy the demands of their greatly spiritualised modes of life. Death will literally be no more,—for it will have become

a kind of voluntary assumption, in which the soul, passing out from an old state of existence, wraps itself in a peaceful sleep to pass, securely held in the bosom of the divine mother, into a state of higher happiness in a more perfect objective life; perhaps on the new planet awaiting it; perhaps once more on the old earth, according to the degree of evolution it has reached.

Already in our old home, the earth, there are souls so enfranchised from matter, the delusions of the flesh, as to have not only conquered evil, but death: who elect voluntarily to pass through the dark portal when it pleases them, or to linger for centuries this side of it. From this condition of blissful repose there emanates a divine saving aura of thought-inspiration for those who still linger in the chains of material existence. The effluence of Divine Mind from on high, passes through sphere upon sphere of deified spirits, into this sphere of emancipated "Great Souls," and through them to lower ranges of the human family on earth. From their elevated mental and spiritual position; from the extensive knowledge they possess of the workings of human souls, their progress, needs, and ultimate destiny, they are enabled to fill an office of infinite usefulness towards humanity; and from them proceeds a constant mental impetus to progress, which they have the power of transmitting to minds that come into more or less *rapport* with them.

These are beings who have preceded us on the road of evolution; many of them belonging to a very ancient period of the world's history; individuals who have disappeared from society, and

were supposed to have "died"; but who, secluded from the world, have passed through states of purification, by which they have become "transformed." They have died indeed to the world, for they have risen above its gross atmospheres into the purer light and air of perfect spirituality of existence. The "*world*" is not yet in a condition to appreciate such divine beauty. In the first place, it refuses to believe such a state of existence possible, and laughs at the idea. But there are minds which can comprehend the possibility of reaching this state of spiritual exaltation; and there are other minds which realise, and *know*.

It is, in reality, the *only* road of evolution for the soul; perfect knowledge of what spirituality *is;* its practical experience in the life of the body; which body, changes its actual substances as the soul attains, or *becomes*, more and more spiritual. By this growth the body becomes at last an *impossible* encumbrance, and the soul and spirit, for ever *One*, can no longer exist materially. Such an exalted being then ascends naturally into the state alone suitable to his transcendent nature. Contact with beings on a lower plane is then possible *only by waves of thought-inspiration*, magnetically transmitted along lines of psychic connection.

True, mental life is possible only by preserving this species of connection. The man who cuts it off, by reversing the currents of the astral light, places himself at once in a condition which invites destruction, or eternal death; previous to which his mental life becomes the insanity

of evil. Nature's movement is to and fro between the two poles of spirit and matter—good and evil—life and death. A man may force himself upon nature's current of destruction, and may survive thus for a lengthened period, returning into new bodies so long as the lower principles of his being hold together, but without an *immortal soul.*

"Nature is as good a mother to the cruel bird of prey as she is to the harmless dove." Both find the means of subsistence; but whilst the one is in beautiful *rapport* with all that is innocent, pure, and everlasting; the other is linked with those appalling, soul-withering energies which end in death. True symbols are they both, the dove and the bird of prey, of good and evil thoughts; of the mental life of the pure and good, contrasted with that of the impure and vicious.

The two conditions of life at the two opposite poles of good and evil are then not only possible, but absolute facts; and the state of social evolution which renders the one possible makes the other equally so. We know by painful experience the existence of the one extreme point of evil. The annals of brutal crimes; the loathsome picture presented at the present day by the public records of bestial degradation into which a very large portion of the population of the earth has sunk, sufficiently depicts the horrible consequences of human perversion. Those of us who are sensitive to such things know full well the painful effect—upon our souls within, which *feel*—of the hellish atmospheres created

by beings who indulge in evil. On the other hand, we know how delightfully expansive and soul-liberating is the psychic atmosphere of the innocent, the pure, the mentally elevated, and spiritually aspiring. It has a morally tonic effect upon the soul, like the purer, strengthening air of mountain heights. The soul takes in large draughts of such delicious auras, and feels itself more buoyant, and as if there were no limits to the space through which it can take its soaring flight. Such are the effects of personal auras.

Were it not that human society is such a mixture, and that there are innumerable currents of good as well as of evil to be met with, one counteracting and reversing the other, life on earth would be impossible. The scene of human existence would end in darkness and death were it not for the presence of those whose mental aura has a continually purifying, renovating, and uplifting effect. We positively owe all happiness, cheerfulness, joyousness, and serenity to the good, and wisely-living amongst us. They are media for the reception and transmission of this saving magnetism,—these astral currents from higher regions of mind-life, with which they have grown into harmony. It is true that the depraved come in for a share of the happiness and enjoyment which thus reaches the earth; but they enjoy in a very different way. They soon vitiate and transform what they receive from light to darkness. Could we analyse the difference between the enjoyment of an innocent, pure-minded maiden and that of a woman, or man, old in evil, under precisely the same external conditions of

happiness, we should find them as wide asunder as the poles,—of totally opposite complexions.

In our ignorance of the true nature of matter and spirit we are accustomed to relegate all the transcendent excellence of which we can form the smallest conception, to regions of existence beyond the earth, to reach which we must pass through the dark portals of death. It is the region where "dwell the angels." Most people localise this region, calling it "heaven." It is a very vague, inconceivable sort of an existence to them, of which even to think causes an irrepressible yawn, so much does the idea fatigue their sense of material enjoyment. It is as irksome as saying prayers and going to church is to some children. All of the world, all of pleasure, they think, must be given up before that can be reached; and the body stretched out in its white grave-clothes—dead: a sufficiently repugnant thought, speedily relegated to the limbo of things it is pleasanter to forget.

It has become almost a trite saying that "we make our own heaven, or hell," but few people realise the practical outcome of this in daily life. That we actually live in as complete a heaven or hell here on this earth, inwardly, and ofttimes outwardly, as it is possible for us to experience at the moment: a heaven or hell created by our own minds, and the condition, healthy or otherwise, of our souls. Indeed, heaven is no *locality*, but the auric emanation of each individual. The soul is not limited to space, and the sufferings of hell mean not a *place* of torment, but the soul's condition of reversal, of opposition, to the will of

God, of loss of harmony with Him, and nature's beneficence: the tortures which ensue from a false position, in which the only *death* has already begun. Instead of the bland, uplifting, joy-producing odylic currents which enwrap the harmonious soul, there are those reversed currents which cause anger, disgust, despair, hatred, revenge; and a sort of psychical sensation which is best described by the word *tightness*, a depression, a feeling of being crushed. We have as yet no words which would fitly express those sensations that belong essentially to the soul's life.

Sometimes there comes to parents a babe of such exquisite sweetness and beauty, so evidently with the stamp of the higher life upon it, that the old nurses shake their heads and say: "That child won't live long!" We often hear the expression: "He or she is too good for this earth," "the good die young," etc., etc. It is true that there are some souls whose stages of evolution requires only a brief sojourn on the earth, in, probably, the last time-personality assumed ere they depart to that Nirvana where they await the coming of others behind them, to continue their march onwards. But it is not true that all the good "die young"; and it is quite certain that some of the "good" who still live in bodies are immensely in advance, intellectually and spiritually, of most of the "good" who *die*. In short, at the present day, it is an almost unattainable *cachet* of transcendent spiritual exaltation to *continue in a body* (but one immeasurably superior to ordinary bodies), in a life on the earth which is inconceivable to a wordly mind.

At the present stage of human evolution upon earth there is such an awakening of the "spirit within," such an inrush of psychical knowledge, that the veils which have long concealed the fact of such existences are becoming more and more diaphanous; and their presence on earth is revealed as a hitherto unsuspected fact, except to a very few who were gradually advancing to an initiation into the same mysterious possibilities of human greatness. From such holy fraternities, missionaries to humanity have from time to time appeared, unknown, uncared for, perhaps treated with public contempt and scorn; and when their mission was accomplished, disappearing again, and leaving no trace behind.

Possessed of a science which deals with the unknown side of nature, the region of *causes*, and spiritual forces, such beings exercise a control over nature which the vulgar call "miraculous." This "science" in olden times was known to the priests of the temples, and was revealed by them to young votaries who proved themselves worthy to receive the knowledge: a fact tested and proved by their passing through the severest ordeals. According to Rebold, Moses was initiated at Heliopolis, where he was educated, into the mysteries of this science; and Jesus, among the Essenian priests of Egypt or Judea. They had the power of controlling forces in the astral light, or ethereal inner atmosphere, where all forces lie latent: the power of reading or seeing in that light, and therefore of perceiving what, from others not so qualified, is completely hidden. Space scarcely exists for such transcendent

powers, and time is as nought. Matter to our sight dense, presents no obstacle to their vision, or to their astral bodies; and their hearing is opened to sounds of which we do not dream. The disembodied phantoms of the astral light are under their control; and a soul hovering above its apparently dead body, may be recalled again into it, and once more resume its bodily functions at their command. Every wonderful power of the newly revived (in the West) science of mesmerism is known to them. This is the power of controlling and directing the human force called "magnetism"—that odyle, or essence derived from the astral light, which emanates from every human body in the form of auras; and may be concentrated and intensified by an action of the will, and projected with a force sufficient to destroy life, or, on the other hand, renew it and restore it. "Search where we may"—says Professor Williams—"this force has been universally acknowledged and used by all tribes and nations; and so far from this being but a science of yesterday, it enjoys the double reputation of being very old, and having stood the test of ages; indeed, we maintain that it is the oldest science extant, and that nothing was practised *as a science* prior to it."

The very serpents of the jungle exercise instinctively and unconsciously, from the impulses of their cruel natures, a similar power in the fascination of their helpless victims, rendering their escape impossible. They become paralysed, poisoned beforehand, by the deadly emanation projected upon them by these objective embodi-

ments of "evil magnetism." Which fact proves that this is a force latent in nature, and employed instinctively by the lower creatures. The knowledge of this science lies at the root of all psychic power, and is given into the hands of man that he may understand, and rationally and beneficently regulate, the currents of good and evil for the good of mankind.

Mesmerism, now generally accepted by the tardy public—loth to believe in anything which concerns the most ethereal but *real* man, the soul—under the modern title of Hypnotism, is a branch of occult physics—the science of hidden nature; the Isis now being slowly unveiled.

Men are toying with the secrets of that power hoarded up within themselves; the electric power of the will: the power which gives it absolute mastery over objects and creatures of lower type or organization; or a greater negativity owing to the presence of disease, or temperamental weakness. Unless fully understood, and unless wielded by a wise and benevolent being who, scrupulously exact to avoid injury to another, would employ the will only in acts of beneficence, even modern experiments prove the great psychological dangers which lie hideously enwrapt in its seemingly plausible innocence and harmlessness. A man does not with impunity, in order to prove his power over his subject, will him to commit an imaginary crime for the amusement of an audience. The tendency to that crime may linger in the semi-disorganised brain, and the poor weak will yield negatively to insane impulses to commit the same or similar crimes without the

controlling presence of the hypnotiser of the hospital, or public platform. It is evident that this would become a most dangerous power in the hands of a man lost to all sense of moral responsibility—an utterly unscrupulous wretch, preying upon his fellow creatures for his own selfish profit. The best safeguard for man or woman is to cultivate a *positive will*, and to hold the mind free from all influences except those of the highest planes of thought, which would flow into the mind as beneficent zephyrs from heaven, maintaining it in the free purity of health.

The knowledge of the mysterious *arcana* enshrined in ancient occultism was protected in olden times from the desecration of the "profane" —the ignorant, animal man, wallowing still in the mud of sensuality; but the *spiritual* man has always entered into it as by the right of heritage.

Although locked in its treasure house, safely away from profanation, by its careful guardians, its signs and meanings can be read by the initiated through the veils of symbolism, indelibly inscribed in the hieroglyphs appearing still upon the ruins of Nineveh and Thebes; upon the crumbling stones of ancient temples; upon the dust-blackened form of the sphynx.

It reposes, indeed, in the majestic silence of the unknown, within the pages of the Christian Scriptures, and the key which alone may open the wondrously grand revelations there enshrined, exists in a book *proscribed by the Christian Church* —the Jewish Talmud.

"From the bed of this occult science sprung all ancient religions, and it holds the explanatory

key of all those divine obscurities in the Scriptures which are the stumbling blocks of ignorance and profanity. In ancient times, when it was exclusively reserved for the education of the priests and kings, it was the absolute mistress and queen of society, before whose august and veiled presence knees bent and heads bowed with that reverence of soul which is given only to God—the unknown.

"It reigned in Persia with the Magi: it dowered India with the most marvellous traditions, with an incredible luxury of poesy, and with the misunderstood grace and terror of its emblems. Greece was civilized by the sway of its divine harmonies, and in every nation may be traced by allegory, and by symbol, the evidences of its supremacy over the world. The Christian Church recognises and acknowledges perpetually that its *mysterious founder* was saluted in his cradle by *the three Magi*. In olden times there was an alliance between Christianity and the *science of the Magi*; but it has been reserved to *that Church* to become antipathetic, and to declare open war against that occult philosophy to which it owes its very birth."* Anathematising it with all the fear arising from ignorance—an ignorance deliberately *chosen*, and persisted in as a species of bulwark or safeguard, behind which its ecclesiastics, drunken with the love of power, should maintain their supremacy over souls by the sway of blind, unenlightened faith—the "Church" hung a veil between itself and the

* Eliphas Levi.

glorious light of this divine science, and compelled it to hide itself behind deeper veils of protection, to become still more occult and mysterious.

The Christian Church will have retrieved its error when it joins hands once more with that mystic science known to and practised by the Holy Mage, whose very Cross was the symbol of the glories of adeptship to which He had attained; upon which He carried out the crowning self-sacrifice of the perfect life, whereby He proved Himself a "*Son of God.*" Until this day of reconciliation arrives, the Scriptures of the Christian Church must remain undeciphered; the visions of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse must remain under the seals of secresy; and the magical key to the divine mysteries possessed by Solomon, must continue (as generally supposed) *lost.* It is, however, certain that in that domain of Intellect governed by the "Word," nothing which was ever written *can be lost.* But when this day arrives, that the Christian Church returns to its allegiance, it will have resolved itself into the grand Universal Church, wherein all nations will unite harmoniously under the sway of the Wisdom-Religion.

CHAPTER V.

The psycho-magnetic currents, established by man's perverse will on the plane of earth, becoming more and more dense, stagnant, and suffocative to souls, Nature breaks them up by convulsive efforts; the Earth going through throes of anguish whilst trying to right the springs of life for her inhabitants; and Death comes upon the scene clothed in greater terrors than ever. His victims number thousands, who perish miserably, crushed by earthquakes, suffocated by pent-up gases suddenly liberated, drowned in overwhelming floods, or burned to death by gigantic fires. Or Man, in his turn, after long chafing under the restraints of tyranny and injustice, himself starts those currents of will forces which drag the demon of War from his lair; and, impelled by the madness with which he fills minds, nation falls upon nation; the dead lie strewn upon the earth; wretchedness and ruin brood where peace and prosperity should smile, and sorrow is the guest of every mind.

MAN has a very ignorant idea concerning Providence; that it is the inevitable will of God which ordains, allowably for good and wise purposes, his misfortunes; when, in reality, humanity collectively, and himself individually, is the power which decrees that he should suffer; that death, from accidents, or cruel diseases, should assail him and his beloved ones; that famine, war, and pestilence should turn his home into a charnel-house, his happiness into wretchedness. It is quite true the ultimate outcome of misfortunes is for good; or, rather, it is a most necessary and quite unavoidable scourge of retribution for past misdeeds, from whose chastisement the soul rises reformed *so far*. Also, it is the urgent and remorseless whirling of the Great Wheel whereon man must hang until by his own act he sets himself free:

the "Wheel of Lives," directed by the arbitrary necessities of evolution. Once entangled in this necessity for objective sense-life, the human entity must exhaust the woes he makes possible by his ignorance, his passive negligence, or his actively perverse determination. The *Karma* of his evil deeds, of his mistaken modes of thought and life, will dog him from incarnation to incarnation, until he has evolved from within himself release from his ignominious shadow.

As with individuals, so with nations; defunct governments leaving legacies of evil for those who inherit power after them, to remove by a wise legislation; and since nothing can as yet be perfect, these, in their turn, commit new mistakes, and pile up new sins against humanity. Hence the whole body suffers, and all its members; and the wheel turns on, grinding out fresh lives and governments, until all be righted through the gradual spiritualisation of the Races. Evolution is Progress, and that road is strewn with corpses; its travellers are maimed, blind, diseased, deformed—many times demoniacal and insane.

Individual man has his own personal, self-attracted misfortunes to bear, and also the misfortunes, not only of his family and nation, but of the whole of humanity. Each one must suffer for the sins of all, and all must suffer for the sins of each one. Hence the sum total of suffering and wretchedness on the earth. *For there is not a crime committed by any one man, or an evil thought entertained, which does not vitiate the psychic atmosphere,—the universal life-element.*

The virulent universally diffused poison of evil

has been, during all the ages of humanity's existence on our planet, poured forth into the astral light; and mankind must long ago have perished, self-poisoned, had not nature, provided with her remedial law of reaction, re-established, ofttimes violently, the equilibrium of forces: when a huge upheaving force will burst its way through the stagnant vapours allowed by a torpid moral sense to settle over minds, wherein the soul's life would eventually become suffocated. There is a vast concurrence of natural forces at such times, all rushing to one point, as if nature's abhorrence, a *vacuum*, required filling. Human beings seem then of no more account than swarms of gnats; and if the good are swept away with the evil, it is of no moment, for it is better that the grand body of humanity should lose an eye, or an arm, than that the whole should perish,—a slow destruction probably, but a very sure one. A great mental shock will often change the current of a whole life; and a widespread calamity rouses the dormant moral sense of thousands.

Ofttimes the opposing current which is to cleanse the astral light of its mephitic vapours is set in motion by the inspired will of one man. An irresistible wave of enthusiasm, started by one master-mind, will psychologise thousands to the sway of one idea, one emotion, and by the huge moral momentum of these united wills, a force is projected which upsets long-established despotisms, removing the yoke of falsehood, injustice and oppression, and liberating souls for new and surprising progress. Thus humanity becomes its own saviour,—righting its own wrongs; as

well as being, conversely, the arbitrary, cruel creator of every wrong, and its own self-destroyer.

To a selfish man it may seem unjust that he should suffer for the sins of others ; but the laws of association render this inevitable. He can only escape the consequences of living in association with others by a total separation and isolation, which again would bring upon him other evils equally as much to be deprecated. If we incur evils from living in consociation, we, on the other hand, obtain incalculable blessings and benefits, besides gaining from fellow-beings that *evolutionary impetus* without which progress is impossible. The only way to escape evils arising from consociation is, *by progress*, to render them less and less possible, until we shall live in a purified society, or collective body.

Every disease which assails humanity is originated by some one individual, or association of individuals. Diseases have their birth in moral deformity ; that deformity not being less serious in its effects because arising from the more venial offences of laziness, indolence, neglect, or stupidity ; in contradistinction to the activity of vilest passions, from whose unrestricted sway there ensues *moral* putrescence, and thence *corporeal* putrescence. Diseases, and corporeal ailments of every kind, are the effects of some mistaken mode of life, or of thought, which vitiates the currents of moral health, from whose poison bodies at length sicken, or minds become tainted by delusions, culminating in complete unsettlement, or mania. It is evil man who

poisons the fountains of life for himself and others : who sets the forces of nature at variance by plotting evil and mischief against his fellow men; by seeking his own gratification and advantage in complete disregard of the rights of others, or of their happiness. If he would make the general good his *own supreme good*, all things would work in harmony, and he would thereby gain a greater good and advantage to himself.

The causes of insanity grow out of our vitiated modes of life : the deformity of "society," which gives to its members corrupt teachings, and makes of sensual pleasures the first aim and object of happiness. The reactionary effect of a life of sensual self-indulgence is disgust of life ; a hatred of self ; a sickened abhorrence of the pleasures which once fascinated and intoxicated the reason ; all which at length culminate too often in despair and suicide. If the brain be too weak to pass through this reactionary ordeal, which is often the means of saving the soul, insanity will ensue. The mind which seeks selfish gratification alone, to the utter exclusion of any higher pursuit, becomes too much weakened to bear up under sudden calamities. Any interruption to its daily routine of narrow earthly enjoyments seems utterly overwhelming to the mental powers which have never transcended the commonplace incidents arising from social position. Fashionable society becomes daily more and more exacting of those "duties" of etiquette, etc., which its votaries voluntarily assume—a glittering yoke, apparently formed of flowers or precious gems, which it is their pride to wear, but which at

length grows to a weight utterly crushing to the soul, beneath which it finds "no time" for the cultivation of even the domestic virtues, let alone the higher mental attributes. The brain becomes disorganised by repeated disregard of nature's demands for rest, as well as by the species of delirium caused by constant draughts of exciting pleasures. Excitement comes at length to be called happiness; and the human being abandoned to this sort of life, is restlessly dissatisfied unless some excitement beckons with rosy finger onwards to the morrow, every moment of to-day being given up to anticipatory preparations for the one great and absorbing gratification which is to come. The weakest minds sink under this sort of self-destruction, and the reaction is hysteria, mania, or imbecility from softening of the brain. Often, too, with bodies unnerved by long indulgence in selfish pleasures, and brains disorganised by excitement and fatigue, human beings elect to become mothers and fathers, when nature, with the materials placed at her disposal from the conjunction of such vitiated, impaired life-forces, can only generate infant bodies which are diseased from birth, and which give evidence sooner or later in life of this disease, which is too often mental. Many times this disease takes a moral form, such as an uncontrollable proclivity towards a certain vice or crime, or else a total deadening of the moral sense, so that the reason seems incapable of discriminating between right and wrong.

Dr. Maudsley, the great authority on *Alienism*, says that he "knows no one more likely to breed

insanity in his offspring than the intensely selfish man, and that an *oblique moral development* is more likely to predetermine insanity in the next generation than many forms of actual mental derangement in parents."

Unions which are totally devoid of pure spiritual love; but, on the other hand, filled and actuated by inflamed passion of the grossest character, become points of attraction for returning souls who have still to wear out by painful self-conquest, some huge debt of sin. Such beings could not be attracted towards parents whose acts of love are directed in purest harmony with nature, with sentiments of divinest beauty, innocence, and true chastity. Nature's partial failures in humanity, the self-condemned wretches who still retain a scrap of good; whom by her immutable law of conservation of the best, she is endeavouring to rid of all which obstructs the final evolution of that best—these are drawn by the affinities with evil generated in former lives, into such hot-beds of moral corruption; and are again born upon the plane of depraved humanity, often to prove a scourge of retribution for the parents who carnally begot the physical body they enter. The weak, diseased, incompetent, or deformed body is the logical outcome, in *true correspondence*, of the injuries deliberately self-inflicted upon the soul in some former life. The re-incarnating psychic principles are drawn into conjunction with those impaired elements which make for it a true correspondential physical body. This is true justice. The soul returning, always always reaps what it has sown: if it has sown

evil by deliberate and wilful opposition to the higher dictates of its nature; if it has immersed itself in selfish, sensual gratification, leading a vicious life, and committing crime, it returns into the slough of astral impurity in which it previously wallowed, lower than a brute beast, to undo perchance the evil it created, to make amends; to reverse again the current of *opposition* to nature's divine laws, into one of *harmony* with them. During such a life of reformation and regeneration, accompanied inevitably by much suffering, the spiritual soul, the only thing that *can* survive, continues its evolution.

Immorality is mental disease and decay, ending, if not arrested, in the death of the soul. It is the canker-worm which gradually eats out the heart of the flower. The physical body is the outcome, on the lower plane of dense matter, of the inner psychic body. Evil is the *only* death, for it kills the soul; and the decay and rottenness of gross matter in earthly forms, is the exact correspondence of that moral rottenness caused by immorality and vice. Psychic sensitives and purified souls *sensibly* perceive this moral condition by colour and by odour in the astral light; as well as by feelings of indescribable torture, which cause abhorrence and terror. Insistance on this point is essential in order to force the truth upon crass material minds, which are stupidly loth to admit even that it *may* be a fact there is another and higher condition of life, in which the immortal part of them may see, hear, and feel.

Nature endeavours to evolve a spiritual soul in man; that higher receptacle of divine spirit. If

man, in the exercise of a perverted will, decrees that she shall fail at any one stage of his evolution, all that he has grown or obtained of spiritual soul disengages itself to try again, but never in *the same personality:* that personality, a mere shell, perishes by its own act of moral or psychic suicide. As man's evolution into eternal life fills up vast ages of time for its completion, so the reverse process of this dying out may fill many ages. This may account for the appearance on earth of some of those inhuman monsters who have rendered still more black the annals of crime; whose demoniacal deeds of darkness appal the orderly, and wise-living: who are seized upon by the hand of the law, and sentenced to expiate their crimes against humanity by a horrible death. These belonging to the body of humanity must exhibit upon the plane of humanity, to the bitterest and most hideous extent, the *full effects* of those causes of destruction which lie wrapt up, latent and concealed, in a life where *self* is permitted to reign paramount, the *health of the soul* is disregarded, and the divine life systematically smothered. The course of such a man is downward: he goes *back* upon the plane of the brute, and lower than the brute; for the souls of animals are in a state of evolution to the higher human plane, which they will reach on some other stage of human development than ours, in a different system of planets. The animal, irresponsible until he develops human reason, is on the ascending road towards eternal life; but the unfortunate man who involves himself in the current of eternal death, is on the

descending road. He becomes a hideous, revolting human abortion, and around him hangs a poisonous aura, which sickens and defiles all who approach it; the atmosphere which his vile thoughts have gradually woven around him, thickened by sensuality, poisoned by venomous hatred and malignity, lurid with the hell-fire of murderous desires and ineffectual yearnings to destroy his kind. Such a wretched being, a *diseased member*, the body of humanity cuts off by a decree of death, or renders harmless in the concealment of some safe seclusion; thereby showing that healthy humanity sees and profits by the lessons of experience in the case of one of its members. The logical outcome of the choice of evil instead of good is forcibly illustrated, the cause of morality is strengthened, society is rid of a source of pollution and disease, and the astral, or life-currents, which had been set flowing in the direction of destruction, receive a check and are reversed.

Vitiated methods of life in which souls progress but slowly, appearing to have a merely vegetative sort of existence, are apparently suffered to remain for a long time undisturbed on certain portions of the earth. Whole nations seem thus at times in a state of decay. Certain habits of thought have resulted in a sort of conviction of the inevitable, and have become fixed as adamant. To attempt to alter them would be almost to destroy life; for one might as well expect to teach an elephant to lift his cumbrous body into the air and fly, as to endow such heavy corporeal minds with the soaring powers of more advanced minds.

They have evolved, nationally, to a certain point; are, from ignorance of anything better, not morally responsible for certain evils of life; and are undergoing a process of slower evolution, awaiting some rousing impulse; which will either awaken them suddenly to a consciousness of something better, when they stand in the presence of some dreadful calamity; or, by the sudden inrush of a superior conquering nation, the old stagnant mental atmospheres are blown to the right and left, disappear, and new moral elements, which uplift into new life, are gradually absorbed.

Nations reach decrepitude, as well as the human units which compose them, and are destined at times to die out. At other times they renew themselves by conjunction with younger, advancing nations, becoming absorbed in the course of time, and losing all outlines of separation. They are like the waves of the sea which advance and recede, and apparently rest a moment until a stronger wave comes and pushes them forward; but there is no real stop, no intermission of the incessant onward rolling of the ocean of human life. There is no real death of nations and peoples. The mould, or matrix of human consociation which gave them form, is broken, and perishes; but the individual *roots* are left in the natal soil, which shoot up again in new personalities, to further carry on their spiritual evolution; frequently in the same old country which knew them centuries before: and this until the work of individual evolution be complete, when the root dies, and the blossom of the soul is gathered for eternal life. The

Atlanteans, the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans live again on earth in personalities of higher evolution, and would plainly see the "line of all their lives," had they reached the crowning apex of spiritual perfection. At that point space and time disappear, and the man is lost in the god.

The work of evolution goes surely on, when all is in harmony with nature; but with many a hitch, many a delay to retard it, when man's will works against nature: and so it will be until he learns to agree with her absolutely, which is again the effect of evolution, of the growth of that Spiritual Soul which sees clearly for itself, discerning evil and good, and wisely avoiding the evil. Up to a certain point, with every advance in knowledge, and repudiation of former states of evil arising from ignorance, new forms of evil, or perversions of truth, crop up. This is the inevitable consequence of imperfection; but the honest desire and effort to do right, will break through every opposing influence, and set man at last upon the peak of perfection towards which he valiantly strives.

As previously said, there exists a subtle sympathy between the planet on which we live and her human inhabitants. Her growth proceeds with theirs, and her very conformation alters with the necessities of human evolution. Her bosom opens to engulph races which have reached a certain dead-lock of progress. Continents, with their magnificent cities and century-piled wealth, sink beneath the ocean's all-obliterating waves, and the stillness of a vast tomb rests in blank

silence where life teemed unrestrained, pursuing a brilliant circuit of human power and grandeur. For man, absolute king on earth, into whose hands nature must yield up sooner or later her every secret, may grow so intoxicated with power in the material life, as to put aside for a time, or for ever, that spiritual growth which the necessities of his being demand. He becomes a sort of earth-god, and in his self-sufficiency rounds out, and excludes the Divine Originator, the polar star of his existence. He then most effectually works for a magnificent downfall—and it comes! —with it sweeping, as into the vortex of a vast whirlpool, every smaller, more insignificant life, innocent or otherwise, which was paling and sickening to a premature decay, in the baleful glare of a material greatness unvivified by divine light.

The earth itself may be thrown out of her just equilibrium of forces, by the stupendous will-perversions of an earthly potentate *who may know how to command the subtle powers of the elements*, and may hold in his hands certain hidden secrets of life and death. Such a complete alteration as might hence ensue of the just and equal swaying of the pendulum of life, brings about its own regulative catastrophe; and nature's offending offspring are swept into the silent destruction they precipitate upon themselves. There is no sin greater, we are told by eastern teachers, than that of the desecration by perversion to *evil ends* of the great occult science, the knowledge and *lawful* exercise of which, would rank man as a god—but, in that case, a god of wisdom and beneficence.

It was the fate of the magnificent Atlanteans, whom Plato describes, to fall from their high estate of purity and goodness, wherein they exercised with wisdom for the good of all, a *lawful magic*—"But when this divine portion began to fade away in them," says Plato—"and became diluted too often, and with too much of the mortal admixture, and the human nature got the upper hand, then, they being unable to bear their fortune, became unseemly, and to him who *had an eye to see*, (*i.e.* psychic vision,) they began to appear base, and had lost the fairest of their precious gifts; but to those who had no eye to see the *true happiness*, they still appeared glorious and blessed at the very time when they were filled with unrighteous avarice and power."

Ignatius Donnelly, in his *Atlantis, the Antediluvian World*, takes us back to that prehistoric period when a "race of gods"—traditions only of whom have been handed down, and whose existence has always been deemed a myth—dwelt in a sort of earthly paradise, from which the legend of the "Garden of Eden" had its birth, and which the ancient Greeks and Romans named "Olympus" back to that early time when man stood nearer to the stage of innocence from which he had emerged—

> "When lived
> That great, original, broad-eyed, sunken race,
> Whose knowledge, like the sea-sustaining rocks,
> Hath formed the base of this world's fluctuous lore."
> (Festus.)

This wonderful people extended themselves over the greater part of the globe, and, as conclusively proved by Mr. Donnelly, upon the

American Continent, where still exist the ruins of gigantic buildings erected—there no longer remains the slightest doubt—by some offshoots of this great nation. That these retained somewhat of the marvellous gifts possessed by their forefathers may be gathered from the appearance of these relics of former power, grandeur, and wealth.

The Atlanteans gradually becoming addicted to the practice of *an infernal magic*, used their super-physical powers unlawfully. They allied themselves with death instead of with life, co-operating with nature on her side of destruction; and thus, we are told, brought upon themselves the engulfing floods of oblivion. The sumptuous wealth which caused their cities to star the earth like gems, from the lavish use they made of gold and precious stones in their buildings, covering walls, pinnacles, and spires with gold, silver, and a metal unknown at the present day, which Plato calls *orichalcum*; the superb edifices of Titanic dimensions, which revealed the extraordinary height they had reached in architecture in which they were probably aided by the powers of magic—all this human grandeur and magnificence sank out of sight at the command of outraged nature, seeking to set her kingdom in order, that humanity should not perish utterly,—falling from the tree of life like fruit with a worm at the core.

In the heart of Peru are found the massive remains of colossal buildings erected by these ancient races which reached the apex of their cycle of evolution many thousand years ago. From the

descriptions given by travellers of the enormous dimensions of solid blocks of stone used in these buildings of walls, gateways, and temples, we can only conclude that they had acquired the use, by *occult knowledge*, of a force before which the most gigantic masses were easily swayed and placed in any desired position. These powerful nations declined and passed away, leaving their scattered remnants sunk in barbarism, retaining only the rudest remembrances of the occult knowleege possessed by their ancestors. The inner, glorious light of spirituality has died out of these old reminiscences of the ancient science which had been so desecrated, and all that now remains is a species of demonolatry and sorcery.

These tribes are rapidly dying out before the advancing tide of European races. They have been for many centuries in a state of retardation of evolution, and can proceed no further along the inherited line. They must evolve new personalities in younger races, and are now merely rapidly perishing indications of certain steps nature has taken in human evolution.

We may make a vague guess at the riches of science possessed by these wonderful precursors of ours, but further we cannot yet go until we have developed the gift of *reading in the astral light* the hidden records of their lives and deeds, which are imperishably inscribed in the aura of those gigantic stones moved by human bodies long since crumbled into dust. Upon this ethereal veil of auric light the images there photographed ages ago would reappear in reality and truth

before the eyes of the *trained seer;* a living panorama of that past whose memories now exist alone in Cosmic Mind. If lifted to a sufficient height of spiritual perfection, we may look along the "line of all our lives"; so may we along the line of lives of other men and nations.

CHAPTER VI.

Periods of mental stagnation, apathy, and decay succeed each other at certain stages of race-evolution; when, if old habits of thought, old conventional forms of religious belief, and imperfect methods of government did not pass away, progression would be impossible, and mankind would sink into senility, stupor, and death. The causes of renewed impulse which spontaneously arise in society are various, and are palpable evidences of the gradual and sure mental evolution going on behind the scenes, upon the astral plane of soul-life, whence reforms and improvements upon a constantly ascending scale are worked out upon the external plane.

Did man possess omniscience, Time would be unnecessary. He would be as the central point of a vast nucleus of light, knowing all things; whence the elaborations of thought, growth, and progression for the attainment of knowledge, would be beneath his all-embracing mental grasp. But the idea has no logical foundation, since the Being we call God must be in the condition of knowing all things; and man, since he exists at all, cannot be as his originator, which would be the obliteration of God. Therefore, he must be placed in relative conditions: he must experience the lapse of time; he must be conscious of space, distances, the separation of objects, the multifarious forms which the various assemblages of atoms may take to his eye and reveal to his mind.

In short, a universe must develop around him; to be conscious of which, to observe, to understand, and to know all its various parts, his mental faculties must evolve, or grow, step by step, unfolding as do the flowers. Hence for him, Time, regulated by the movements of his planet-home,

must unrol its endless records : and he is ever mounting upwards *against* it, each day a step upon its spiral stair : an easy ascent when he is glorified by self-conquest ; but whilst he is still held in the chains of an unconquered selfhood, Time is for him like a treadmill, upon which he mounts painfully and laboriously, with *no ascension*, but only a continual fatiguing repetition of the same tedious round day by day.

He himself, by his life, his thoughts, his acts, fills the records of time, inscribing upon them also his observations of the natural phenomena which occur around him ; which form an endless volume of reference for every race of humanity ; passing from cycle to cycle ; some of its pages remaining for ages unturned, their treasures forgotten—for the time being lost, veiled. But as human units succeed each other in progression, as mind after mind scales the empyrean heights of knowledge reaching to the foot of God's throne, new necessities, new wants, new aspirations are awakened, and traces of the shining flight of precursors along the climbing road, are gradually discovered ; the closed pages of the inexhaustible volume are opened, and every want, every aspiration receives its full gratification from thoughts left like dust of gold glittering along the pathway.

The astral light, the ethereal ocean of mind-life, yields up the freight of undying thought left in its currents by mighty mental workers who have long ago passed upwards, and the vast, endless flood rolls on, never diminishing, but increasing infinitely.

In his finite weakness and imperfection, from absolute incapacity, man falls from his soaring path upwards ; his winged thought, like the feeble pennons of the lark, carrying him only a certain height, from which he sinks back again to the rest and security of mother earth. In the morning of life he makes many and repeated flights, whilst a joyous song rings with varying cadence through the air ; but as the day for him descends towards night, the night of his short closing span of life in time, he soars no more, but rests and waits. A period of time has rounded itself out from its beginning, or inception, to its climax, and thence to its descent and close. At the close comes stillness, rest.

As with individual man, so with nations. These periods of vigorous life, growth, and progress, are succeeded by periods of apathy and decadence, sometimes ending in death ; for nations, like the units which compose them, pass out, and leave only relics behind. If the tale of a nation's evolution be not complete, new mornings of revival will succeed the nights of apathy and psychical darkness. Young generations throw off the old burthens of ignorance which oppressed their grandsires, and by the light of new thoughts and ideas make a fresh start upon the road of progress. The burning of heretics, the torturing and destroying by inches of human brethren because of a difference of religious belief, has become impossible in an age wherein every man has liberty to think according to the dictates of his own enlightened reason. And the world is progressing to a still broader platform of religion,

whereon creeds and dogmas, and every chain and manacle of a *blind* faith, which only binds and cripples the soul, forbidding expansion and growth, will mentally occupy such places as we now assign to the old thumbscrews, spiked collars, racks, and "*scavenger's daughters*,"* of an age when the self-styled "ministers of God" desecrated the name and the spirit of religion by acts of the most fiendish brutality, murdering their own souls by the commission of hideous crimes against humanity, the whilst they posed before the world as saintly "defenders of the faith." Humanity can no more return to such a condition of ignorance and moral degradation. Education of the masses and a wider-spread freedom have rendered these abominations impossible. Such an incarnate fiend as Torquemada will never again poison the astral atmosphere with his thoughts and acts of vengeance, cruelty, and oppression, lying like a paralysing nightmare upon every soul, forbidding its growth. The evil of persecution in the name of religion probably reached its culmination in this abortion of the Romish Church, leaving an ineffaceable mental picture of such hideousness, that for very hatred of its ugliness progressed humanity must ever *will* to do otherwise. Persecution nowadays finds a milder form of expression amongst committees of workhouses, which decree to deprive paupers under their care of small doles of tobacco, as a luxury objected to by truculent ratepayers. The day will come in the progress of humanity when there will be no more paupers for grudging

* A name given to an instrument of torture.

ratepayers to support in establishments where they are made to feel that the charity offered in the name of Christ has been carefully divested of mercy, and becomes a pang sharper to bear than the stings of poverty; when rather than have the blush of honest shame brought upon their toil-worn cheeks they prefer to starve in garrets.

The beauty of a kind action is lost when it is forced from an unwilling heart. Compulsory charity without mercy, pity, or human love, is as sawdust or ashes to the forced recipient—an insult from which he draws back with a brute rage in his heart, hating the hand whose succour overwhelms with contumely. True charity loves to give happiness, and rejoices in the sight of it. Humanity will have made strides of progress when to *make happiness for others* has become the life-object of each unit.

The records of time unfailingly point out by the agitations, revolutions, and enthusiasms which have run their course through society like electric currents, causing many times the most destructive upheavals of psychic force—the passage of those revivals, those impulses of renewed life whose reactionary currents subvert and destroy injurious conditions of stagnation and apathy, wherein soul-life would gradually be suffocated and perish.

Continued ease of life purchased by wealth, with the enervating luxuriousness attending it; the delights of the senses sought in rare and beautiful objects; the fascinations which material life is made to yield up to sight, hearing, and touch, of every imaginable gratification; from

which the cultivated intellect also draws an infinitely increasing pleasure—all these attach the man, who cannot look beyond them, to the earthly paradise, the sensual heaven, he makes for himself. He insensibly grows more and more selfish, and the wants, the necessities, the rights of his fellow-beings pale away into insignificance before his desires, his arbitrary demands for ever more and more of the pleasures to which he has become wedded. He becomes increasingly active to prevent the crumbling away of his petty kingdom from the lack of wealth : becomes, if he be a king, more and more despotic, and preys not only upon his own people, but upon neighbouring nations : and if he be an ordinary man in the world of men, labours with unabated energy to increase his wealth, trampling regardlessly and mercilessly upon others in the struggle.

The insensate desire to heap up wealth for its own sake alone, is a passion which upsets the just equilibrium of social happiness, and is the sole cause of the existence of its ghastly antithesis—poverty. Because one man, or a few men, choose to make themselves the selfish *nuclei* of an agglomeration of that precious metal which purchases for all men the means of supporting existence, a dead-lock ensues in the currency of the golden stream, of which there is more than enough to make the happiness of all. Whilst one is revelling in a superabundance, piling luxuries and grandeur of life about him, others are being ground in the mill of squalid want, until they lose almost every human lineament of soul, and are nothing but beasts of burthen, toiling cattle,

who have no time to remember even that they possess minds. There can here be no spiritual growth, and nature is continually making efforts to break up these retrogressive conditions. Not only do they arrest spiritual progress for one individual, but for all who cannot rise above the deleterious mental atmospheres thus created. These are either dazzled by the display of grandeur, confused and led away from higher purposes of life, filled with envious desires, and actuated by emulative efforts to equal or surpass; or they are oppressed by poverty, and their souls sicken for the privileges of life *nature* never denies but *man* snatches away. They grow mentally deformed, life ceases to be anything but a curse to them, and they meditate only crime. From this quarter generally come those retributive blows which re-establish equilibrium, and permit *souls* to grow, to expand, to ascend higher.

It is at his own peril that any man upsets the true balance of justice and right; that he sets in motion an astral, or odic current subversive of human happiness—inharmonious with nature's laws for the *good of the whole.* The effects of selfish greed, or of any other sin against the fellow man, invariably return in some reactionary current upon the man who is guilty of such evil actions; and so perfect are nature's retributive laws, that *one* life may probably not suffice to remove from the soul the disastrous effects of selfish wrong-doing.

Man, as yet, continually blinds his eyes to the fact that humanity is ONE BODY, and an injury to one member is an injury to the whole: the sickness and deformity of one member impairs the

PACIFIC SCHOOL

health and beauty of the whole body. And, one day, in order that the health of the whole body may be restored, the members withheld from healthful growth, will indubitably react against their oppressors, compel attention, and force reform. That the whole body is extensively diseased, deformed, and depraved by the wrongs of ages, the state of the world at this moment plainly reveals: the effects of humanity's sins against humanity; the poisonous condition into which the "breath of life" has been changed by evil methods of thought and living; until a thought-aura like a brazen wall closes in the minds of men, and they cannot break through it. They cannot transcend its monotonous, habitual routine, nor see its enervating, crushing, stupefying mental effects, which lull into a dangerous somnolence of selfish ease and false security, wherein life must fall into the decay of non-progression. They go on day by day, year by year, until at length the malarial conditions which have gradually grown up around them, and the discontent of the more healthily progressive minds cause the outbreak of some revolution, some huge uprising, wherein the old order is overthrown to make place for the new, decreed by the silent irrevocable fiat of that spiritual evolution of the whole human race which nothing can arrest. That fate which overrules all, under the name of progress, and stands, in the shadow of the darkness created by man's ignorance, like a Nemesis ready armed to strike down the oppressor, just so soon as the general good of humanity proclaims that his day of retribution has dawned.

The world is now passing through a period of widespread re-action against old despotisms, effete religious doctrines, and that unconfessed but tacit moral oppression exercised by the rich and powerful upon the patient toilers who minister to their luxuries. Human souls, moved by the quickening germ of a diviner nature within them, begin to recognise they were created for something better, and to agitate the stagnating surface of society in order to obtain the right and privilege—the *room* to develop it. In their ignorance they too often resort to murderous violence to awaken the apathetic wealthy classes to a recognition of their rights. But also thousands of their brethren, of the educated and wealthy classes, who have progressed sufficiently in the love of freedom, and the love of humanity, advance from their ranks and meet them halfway, agitating too in a more calm and rational manner to establish modes of life more consonant with the freedom and happiness of all.

Demos stands in his toil-worn rags in the open market-places of the world, and loudly demands a more just regulation of governments, laws, and methods of living; and Aristos, warned by sanguinary revolutions of the past, turns an attentive ear, and acknowledging the time is gone by for successful selfish resistance, makes up his mind to temporise, if not grant, the requirements of his less fortunate brother.

These reactionary currents mark the progress of human minds to higher levels of evolution, and prove that the old order of things is no longer suited to the vigorous irrepressible growth which

is urging its way to conditions of broader freedom, superior enlightenment, and a tone of society consonant with the spiritual development of the masses, as well as of the more refined few of the upper educated classes.

The day will come when kingdoms will be ruled by democratic princes, no longer isolated in the selfish grandeur of sumptuous palaces, whilst the streets of their cities are thronged with the poor, taxed to maintain their state, but with all their opulence melted like gold in the refiner's fire, so that the wail of poverty shall no longer rise like an accusing voice from the land; but only the smiles of prosperity greet them as they mingle amongst their kind—one man equal to another, and all bound together by the links of brotherhood.

When that great fact of the *one-ness of humanity* comes to be universally acknowledged, until it shall be the ruling principle of justice and right in each mind, regulating its secret thoughts, and open daily acts, one of the grandest lessons of spiritual evolution will have been learned; one of the sublimest steps made in upward progress, whose effects in the increased happiness, prosperity, greatness, and beauty of mankind are almost inconceivable. The world would then be permeated by a different mental aura, in which evil would become well-nigh an impossibility. It is difficult to imagine the effects of such a clear, purified, tonic mental atmosphere as would thence exist, in which an emotion of hatred, envy, covetousness or lust; a thought of evil machination against another, would, if entertained, cause

intense discomfort, or pain, to all—as now the commission of a terrible crime causes a thrill of agony to pass through all minds of an elevated nature: difficult to foresee the vast powers of intellect, the clearness of spiritual perception which would distinguish mankind under the effects of such a purification of the astral light from its present painful conditions of reversed order, which cause a species of psychic suffocation.

We are conscious of the fact that minds may be stupefied or poisoned, confused, deceived, led away into evil; but we do not rightly conceive the causes lying at the back of these mental phenomena. There are, in short, such floods of evil auras being continually poured out from the great body of humanity, that it is difficult to escape the poisonous effects. We live in an atmosphere of mind, of thought—and thought is substance — vaporous, ethereal, imponderable, intangible, yet *substance.* It spreads itself from mind to mind, it permeates the atmosphere, it regulates individuals and the world at large according to the way in which it is received; and it is modified and changed by each mind in turn. Hence the different degrees of good and evil; hence the difference in modes of religious belief, in the views that men take of every subject, of incidents, of the very aspect of nature, of God, of heaven, of life.

It is difficult to transcend the ambient mental atmosphere in which the world now lies wrapt. Only purified minds—minds which have evolved so far out of a state of evil—can reach the higher

levels, and these are always like the mountain tops which are first illumined by the dawning light. These give us the highest, noblest thoughts upon which receptive minds feed, are refreshed, strengthened, delighted, uplifted. In short, the whole of life is the *life of mind*—sensual life is but the veil, the clothing, the unreal, the transitory, and deceptive; and if we sink ourselves in it utterly, it is the suffocative, poisonous, malefic. But even the highest minds on earth are more or less chained down and hampered by their unprogressed brethren; unconsciously they suffer from the effects of the insidiously diffused auras proceeding from evil members of society, and even they cannot progress in the *one* life beyond a certain point, on account of their less progressed brethren.

We have but to look back a few hundred years to mark the gradual ascension of the whole of mankind to higher levels of mind-life, and we can but feel that what *has* been shall continue to be, until humanity, the Great Giant, struggling to lift himself from the slime of earth, shall no longer present features of abhorrent ugliness, warring against his own members, demoniacally insane and suicidal, poisoning his atmosphere with the effluvium of hatred and every evil thought and deed; but shall walk beneath heaven a MAN of noblest proportions and form, and of angelic countenance—his thoughts of love, his acts of mercy.

* * * * * *

Forms of religious belief on this earth are not exempt from the law of progress; the *form*, like

all things external, being the expression of the mental conditions which gave them birth. There is but one grand truth regarding God and man, the deeply hidden spiritual root from which has sprung all the weedy growths of religious teachings during the ages of man's evolutionary existence on this planet. Given to primordial man in its original purity and integrity, it has become gradually overgrown and obscured, warped, twisted, and reversed, until for the majority it has become transformed into a great *untruth*. It has been presented in an infinite variety of modes according to the mental conceits of self-constituted teachers, whose hallucinations remain imprinted upon the astral light—the atmosphere of thought—for centuries, handed down from generation to generation as divine revelations, which, nevertheless, have not escaped being added to, and partially transmogrified in conformity with the intellectual progress of the day. Some of these religious teachings—the outcome of fanatical enthusiasm and egotistic self-inflation, mistaken for the working of God on the soul—could have nothing but a stultifying effect upon minds, under the burthen of which progress would become impossible. Such methods of salvation are doomed to perish. They reach their periods of culmination, then begin slowly to wane, and pass out ; their errors being corrected by new generations gifted with clearer mental insight. Other external forms again then grow out of broader and truer conceptions of God and man's duty towards Him ; and with the expansion and ascension of souls into higher realms of thought,

clearer and more perfect views are obtained, until at length the SPIRIT—the divine Atma, the over-soul—sheds the full, effulgent glow of absolute truth through the mind, and man requires no longer any earthly teacher, knowing for himself.

All primordial forms of worship have gradually become more or less smothered under dense over-growths proceeding from minds less spiritual than their founders, who, in some instances, were men whose evolution was by thousands of years in advance of the majority of the race : Avatars, some of them—true "Sons of God," whose words were spirit and light. Necessarily much of their teaching, incomprehensible, in its full spiritual significance, to the untrained minds so far behind them, was conveyed in the form of parable, or allegory, which is the usual form of Holy Writ. But the *initiated*, the *illuminated*, have ever been able to read and reveal this inner occult significance. Some of these have always remained on the earth, conjoined in fraternities whose life-practice is the purest asceticism, who pass through severest novitiates during periods of many years, before being accepted as members of the brotherhoods : who attain, after lifetimes passed in eliminating from their bodies every gross physical atom, to that gloriously exalted spiritual state when nature's hidden secrets are opened to their knowledge. They exist in a purely psychical or spiritual condition, or in a purified physical condition, according to the stage of their evolution. Lifted into the spirito-psychic state, they may know what transpires at any quarter of the globe. They may become cognisant of indi-

vidual minds in any country or nation whose increasing mental light brings them to their notice, exploring the whole of their thought-life. They may withdraw from such physical bodies as they still retain, and transport themselves thousands of miles in the astral body, making this invisible body visible or tangible at pleasure. They may communicate by thought with minds open to such communion, or by audible voice, thousands of miles away from the locality they inhabit.

But exalted as these beings are above our more backward condition of evolution, yet the state of elevated spiritual perfection they have attained is one which awaits the whole of humanity, and which, in the course of cycle after cycle they will most certainly evolve into, unless they destroy their own chances. These, our exalted brethren, were once as we are; they have but preceded us up the shining spiral stair of spiritual evolution, and await us there, helping us in every way open to them, and watching our progress, not only with that interest which springs from purest brotherly love, but with that absorbing sympathy which the great human family excites in every uplifted mind: that "great orphan, humanity"—*orphan* from the fact that the larger bulk does not yet know its spiritual Father and Mother.

From a period farther back than we can look, have these secret fraternities existed, passing on their mystic knowledge from age to age. But, in reality, as they have annihilated time and space, prolonging their existence in the body at will for hundreds of years, the mere preservation of knowledge for thousands, or millions of years

would not be difficult. Inasmuch as thought is inscribed in the astral light, these seers, to whom the great etheric ocean yields all its secrets, might draw from its treasure-house *at will*, the mental possessions of their glorious forerunners. From this shining host—for their ranks must during the ages of our earth's existence have extended upwards and upwards far beyond our powers of conception—from this host of glorious beatified minds, descend to us the inspirations of our genius, the discoveries in science and arts which we think we make unassisted, and a continually attracting and uplifting psychic current of divine magnetism. That this is a fact—a fact of spiritual science—every page of this book goes to prove.

"Heaven"—the Christian's term for the highest state—is not reached except by the spiritual evolution of each man. Myriads of men must have reached that condition. Myriads had reached it living upon planets which existed before our small system of planets evolved into objective life; which have now passed into a state of non-existence, their inhabitants having grown out of the necessity of using them. As the world did not begin with our little earth, we may reasonably conclude that systems of planets have already existed and passed away. "Heaven" is the *spiritual condition* into which have ascended souls which have become one with the *Logos*, forming a mental sphere of inconceivable light and power, containing all knowledge, all beauty, all happiness; and from this superincumbent or inner sphere, flows down, or out, to the inhabi-

tants of earths, or planets, every manifestation or power of life—through the divine-spiritual men who have reached their apotheosis, or who, in Christian parlance, have become "the angels of heaven." God can only come to man clothed—in a human form, or forms. Sphere upon sphere of divine beings reach up to Him, and the lowest sphere is nearest to man on earth. As he evolves more and more of the divine—the hidden germ within him—the more perfect becomes his conception of God, and the nearer does he approach unto Him.

Is it not evident that as we ascend higher we must reach the culminant form of religion?—filled by the one vital absolute truth which nought can assail or alter? That our souls must be fashioned in accordance with this truth, for it must enter into us and become our very being? "There is no religion higher than truth,"—for truth is the core, the inspiring soul of religion, which becomes its external codic form for the regulation of life. Necessarily, as man progresses, religious codes must become modified to suit his changing requirements. "Thou shalt not steal" becomes an unnecessary command to a soul risen beyond the necessity of bearing in mind such an injunction. As the mind husks off its old persuasions it rises into higher capacities, wherein its expanding powers may feast themselves upon the clearest insight into *causes*, that it may fully understand the *reasons* for things; *blind* obedience from faith having been the leading-strings of the more childish mind, whilst passing through its earliest stages of ignorant trust. As nothing but

the highest truth, absolutely satisfactory to the insatiable demands of a full-grown intellect, will at the present day suffice for the most advanced minds on earth, we necessarily now see a decadence of the religious forms of the past. Dogmas, and theological explanations of abstruse points, heavy with the crass imperfections of the heavy minds which put them forth, are to-day rejected with the cool contempt of intellects which pierce through fogs of *belief merely*, with the electric brilliancy of thought, which allows no dark holes and corners wherein sophistry may lurk. The age is ready and expectant of new truth, or of new light thrown upon truth, and the answer to the demand already descends from the supernal realms of cosmic mind. Why? Because everything is growth, or evolution. And as the expanding flower is sure to obtain from nature's fecund bosom every element essential to its growth into perfection—so the mind of man in its progression draws in from nature's soul, or the Universal Mind, every essential requisite to its expansion into that condition which will unify it with the One Absolute Truth.

The old dogmatic tyranny of "churches" is passing out; the minds of men will no longer endure it; and the pratings of priests fall upon deaf ears. Something more is required to satisfy expanding intellects than the authority of a white robe, or a clerical coat. But the wearers would be gladly listened to did they advance with the age, and qualify themselves to unfold the symbolical meaning of the Scriptures; and give palpable evidences of such soul-purification and illumi-

nation as would prove their near mental approach to those higher realms of inspiration which are identified with the initiated of the venerable past, ere those vital truths which teach of the hidden transcendent powers of the inner, the psychic man, were religiously buried beneath the petticoats of Popes and Cardinals. The transcendent powers of the soul, which has obtained victory over self, are no longer to be deemed a gift of *working miracles* conferred by divine favour; but the natural outcome of a superior state of evolution. The time is past for this locking-up of the temple of God from the children of men. By study and research, by reason and spiritual insight, man may prove for himself that his more ethereal and higher self—the only portion of his complex organism which *can* survive—returns upon the earth to inhabit new physical bodies, so long as he has not yet evolved the *divine-human* principle, or spiritual ego. This is the germ hidden within, which must be brought to the full perfection of a divine objective life, and to his then beatified consciousness. This is the sole reason for his existence as man; and to work out this intention of nature, every step of which he must become conscious, he is rooted on earth until the celestial blossom of his life is ready to be gathered, when earth shall know him no more: at which happy period of consummation, his perfected soul will be able to trace its evolutionary course through all the many robings of perishable personalities the exigencies of its progress have compelled it to assume on the plane of matter.

Having buried their pearl of great price until

they have forgotten they possessed it; having remained seated in a kind of dotage upon a heap of cold ashes for centuries, the ecclesiastical oligarchies denominated "the Church"—Protestant or Romish—begin to find themselves deserted of their children. Vainly do they call to them, they will not heed pleadings nor threats. The discoveries of science have given the lie to those venerable fables with which "the Church" was wont to hoodwink its followers, keeping them in the leading-strings of a blind faith. The human intellect has leapt over the old barriers which restrained it within the call of a voice no longer able to lead or to guide; and although the lower *ego*, filled with conceit, wanders into the fogs of materialism, and the utter darkness of total negation of God, yet it is but a temporary aberration of the human mind. That very "science" which such minds worship, with its hard facts and proofs, and which is the only testimony they can accept, is waiting ready to give proofs of fullest satisfaction upon the higher plane of spirituality, to which plane the most exalted intellects already ascend, and learn that which removes every shadow of doubt or disbelief.

In the Far West, amidst a people of yesterday—which, like an infant Hercules, strangles the serpents of old-time sophistries whilst still in its cradle—amidst this people nature has set in motion a reactionary impulse against the spiritual stagnation which ensues from two conservative a reverence for that imperfect *past*, out of which the *present* is ever unfolding; and the

breath of a newer life, of greater activity and rejuvenating vigour, blows athwart the condensing mental atmospheres of the opposite hemisphere. Its moulding effect upon thought and life have been largely evidenced within the past fifty years.

The old religious teachings of the parent countries are characterised by a broader interpretation in this freer land of the West, where men are so impatient of shackles that the only Church of the East—the Romish—which has sought to exercise any authority over its adherents in this cradle of freedom, has found itself compelled to rule with the lightest hand, or run the risk of for ever alienating the allegiance of its youngest born. The Protestant Church assumes in this mental Utopia, so many aspects, and is divided into such a variety of sects, that the strength of unity is lost,—but the freedom of minds is enhanced.

"Christianity of to-day is as different from what it was in the first and second centuries of the Christian era, as modern masonry is different from what it was in ancient times. Religion has attempted to control humanity through fear, having created a devil to keep man in subjection, and force the belief that God, who is the quintessence of purity and holiness, is a vindictive and angry being, who takes delight in chastising those who, through ignorance, violate the divine law. While this religious conflict has been progressing, Christianity has gradually lost its hold on the public mind. At the same time, humanity longs to know something of the future,"*—and that

* "The Path," April, 1886.

"something" spiritual science, and the awakening of the soul to spirituality, alone can give.

The evil effects of the spiritual stagnation so long existing in the Churches are appallingly displayed in the increase of crimes of the most brutal character, of insanity, and of suicide. Parents display less love for their offspring than do the beasts of the jungle, and children lift murderous hands against the parents they have never been taught to reverence. The rivers daily yield up the mangled remains of unrecognised victims of secret crimes. Mere children resort to suicide, or flaunt their criminal propensities, with brazen audacity, in the face of the public, reckless of shame, indifferent to punishments. External hardness, coarseness, and brutality of bearing are the general characteristics of the lower ranks. Respect and reverence for the aged, or for women, for the helpless, or the innocent, are rapidly disappearing and giving place to brute force and the coarsest, most unblushing selfishness. The white flower of chastity is worn by the choice few, who have difficulty in bearing it unscathed through the persistent assaults made upon it. What does all this indicate but that spiritual stagnation in the Churches, and thence in those minds the teachers of religion can no longer reach, is causing the gradual retrogression into brutedom, and the *death of human souls*, from total decay of the moral sense? It is, indeed, a dark age; spiritual light is completely obscured for a large portion of the human race; the merest gleams of it linger in the minds of another large portion; and in

a very small minority it is increasing in power and splendour. *These* will be the saviours of humanity. The light they have received already trembles along the mental heavens, an auspicious dawn welcomed by all congenial spirits as soon as they perceive it. By degrees, in the course of many centuries, there will be "a new heaven and a new earth"—that is to say, a more spiritualised intellect regulating the daily earthly life of the whole of humanity.

The old and worn-out is passing away, and many eyes are open to perceive it. We witness the decadence of all things formerly sufficient and adequate to the needs of humanity, but now no longer able to bear the strain of the giant demands made upon them. Men discover the rottenness and decay hidden under the tinsel and paint of false pretences. Especially is this the case in matters of religion: not that religion is really perishing, but the empty old shells of "Churches," the external man-made forms, which have lost the kernel of spiritual truth they were designed to enshrine. Man does not grow out of the necessity of religion, but he does grow out of the swaddling clothes of old forms, and the theological pap ancient doctors of divinity deemed all-sufficient for the ignorant *oi polloi* they had to lead to the founts of eternal truth. These reverend gentlemen long ago mistook their way, and wandered into by-paths of theological hair-splitting disquisitions upon doctrines framed to enshrine spiritual verities, whose light their blind souls could not descry shining from within the vesture of words. Vain egoists!

who extinguished the light *within* for the sake of following a certain stiff, dry, soul-splitting formula of unreasoning, blind belief termed *orthodoxy!* As if ever-expanding, infinite truth, each day requiring some new setting forth, as more and more of it becomes mentally conceivable, could be shut up in a nut-shell, and swallowed like a pill!

In every country on the globe it is evident that *forms* of belief are in their decrepitude, if not utterly dead; whilst their spiritually starving adherents keep up the old empty ceremonials merely because they have as yet learned nothing else, and mechanically travel the same paths the feet of their forefathers were set in ages ago. As the ancient forms of worship of Nineveh, Chaldea, and Egypt have passed away, so are the present *forms*, ceremonies, and observances, decreed to be suitable outward expressions of internal verities, passing slowly away. But as yet the majority of minds do not see with sufficient clearness the reviving light of Truth, to begin to formulate any new codes of external religious observances.

Meantime, nations impatiently throw off the suffocative shackles imposed upon them for centuries by ecclesiastical tyranny, and destroy by the fiats of the law those hoary haunts of indolent monasticism which were burthens to the land, and obstructions to intellectual development. Modern Sindbads, in the shape of discontented tithe-payers, and dissentients of all denominations, unclasp from their necks the choking arms of a senile Mother-Church, and coolly set down a burthen they can no longer

endure. The prevailing characteristic of the age is "Reaction"—one of the most palpable proofs of mental and spiritual progress. Not only do these reactionary currents of will-forces set in, in small whirls and eddies, but in larger ones, which sweep into one torrent myriads of wills, whose combined influence makes itself felt in wholesale reforms and revivals. In these revivals, when of a religious type, there is a desperate effort made to resuscitate the defunct, for souls are longing for higher life, and until knowledge descends more fully, the mind, from pure ignorance as yet of anything better, must fall back upon the old customs of religious worship they have outgrown. They add to, vary, and change them, but they are still blundering in the dark as regards some of the most vital truths. They are, however, saved from utter spiritual perishing, and keep up a more healthful psychic activity; banding together in companies united by a common sympathy, and forming a powerful odic atmosphere, which excludes vice, hopelessness, apathy, gloom, and that morbid despair which would otherwise impel to suicide. If a man's mind is fully occupied under the conviction that he is saving his soul by certain processes, and thereby secure of going to heaven after death, he is not so likely to be lured by vice, or to meditate crime; or, driven by despair, to rush through the portals of death into the dark unknown of the after life.

Thus, nature, moving in undisturbed majesty along her prescribed path of evolution, gradually lifting the whole body of humanity, who, sooner

or later, become spiritually healthy and lend themselves to her efforts; and ridding herself of abhorred obstructions hopelessly diseased—strives to counteract the slow-creeping death of psychic stagnation which is the consequence of humanity having reached a certain stage of progress, when the presentation of Truth which suited a former period has grown stale, unsatisfying; and a new, broader, more spiritual elucidation is urgently needed: lifting those mystic veils which were hung for protection before the Holy of Holies *until humanity should be ready* for the light: when there would not be so much danger that the pearls of great price should be trampled under the feet of swine: when they could be trusted in the venerating hands of at least a few who would safely hand them down to posterity.

Nothing occurs by chance, whatever may be the appearance to unreflecting minds, who have no more idea of what lies beyond the objective scenes which limit their world of sentience than the gnat whose life-span may be only a day. A spiritual cause lies behind everything that occurs, and a spiritual object, end, or effect is sought by means of the natural or objective and illusory plane upon which occur all the phenomena of nature.

Things are not as they seem to us; all the convulsions of nature have a spiritual origin or cause; the mental growth and expansion of individuals and nations, the changes in the world of men and of society, however chaotic, unreasonable, or evil they may seem, all are swayed by inexorable laws of necessity growing out of the

progression of humanity. The world exists for mankind, and the outer plane of objectivity, of dense matter, beautiful and real as it is to our senses, which we love and cling to with a fatal absorption of the whole of life—this outer plane of sentience is a hollow, illusive, unreal, phantasmagoria which has its birth in the continually changing mind of man. Upon this plane nature works out every divine fiat for the good of humanity, unresting, *never unconscious*, forgetful, or sleeping—conscious with a consciousness unlike ours : in us, around us, far beyond us—the Great Mother, to whom Time, which is all in all to us, is but as the snap of a string. Our mother bears us in her bosom, chastising us when we break her laws, correcting us by new knowledge ; leading us to her hidden treasures ; guiding our souls out of the darkness into the light ; ready with new gifts when we are ready to receive them ; pouring floods of truth from brimming, undreamed-of reservoirs into the gaping voids long slowly preparing to receive them, by which the waste and desert places shall be made fertile, and life shall be in the place of death. And all these grand processes we each one of us aid in the working out, by the minute, seemingly insignificant, details of our daily lives.

Through the human intellect, revealed possibly through one mind, or through many, will that spiritual light come which is to electrify mankind to new life. Perhaps it already dawns as the sun rises from the East, where Jesus was born, lived, and died ; where he was trained from boyhood in the mysteries of the divine science,

having brought to its study the spiritual evolution completed through many lives, which enabled him to rise into the condition of a "Son of God"—the great and noble Initiate, mentally illumined by the light of divinity—an Avatar to lower brethren.

In that East, where live nations in every stage of progression, some passing through a slow decay, whom we of the West, in the pride of our Christian ignorance, are accustomed to call "heathens"—in that East lie veiled and treasured in silence riches of spiritual knowledge undreamed of by the powerful intellects of the West. From that quarter, from teachers young and old, of whom as yet we know nought, we may learn what that true spiritual life is which can make a heaven of this world, utterly kill out all evil, and transform man into the likeness of Jesus Christ, who was the perfect embodiment of such a life.

To send out one thought upon the astral currents is oftentimes sufficient. Its light is sure to impinge upon some receptive mind, which, sooner or later, gives it utterance to the world. A light already thus dawns along thousands of minds in every quarter of the globe; and souls long thirsting, long wearying of darkness, and struggling painfully towards the light, have sent up from the secresy of studious seclusions, shouts of acclamation and gladness, which have found an echo only in the astral atmospheres. They recognise at once the guerdon towards which they have hopelessly strained all their lives—yielded at length to crown their upward growth through

many incarnations of the evoluting soul. They *know* they have at last unearthed their pearl of great price, clearing from off its pure whiteness, by self-purification, every obscuring stain of matter; and they go forth strengthened to help stumbling humanity to find what they have found.

CHAPTER VII.

Nature is ever re-adjusting the equilibrium of forces: this is the activity of life, and by this means not only is the atmospheric air purified and rendered fit to support life, but the inner, ethereal atmosphere is also subject to similar laws for the preservation of the soul's life. Hence the stagnation, or fixity of that in which movement alone is life, must be broken up, changed, again set in motion, by the action of the law of contraries.

"The grand life-agent reveals itself by four sorts of phenomena, which profane science has manipulated under four names: caloric, light, electricity, magnetism.

"Its living power is maintained by the action of two contrary forces—attraction and repulsion, or, as Hermes says, 'it is always ascending and descending.' It is by this double force that all is created and that all subsists. Its movements are a succession of infinite in-foldings and out-foldings, in-rolling and out-rolling, simultaneous and perpetual, by contrary spirals which never encounter each other.

"The absolute movement of life is thus the result of two perpetual contrary tendencies, which are never in opposition. These balance the universe and maintain it in equilibrium. These forces exist in the moral or mental world as well as in the physical; and exist in philosophy and religion, as well as in physics. In physics they produce equilibrium, in philosophy criticism, in religion progressive revelation.

"In the 'soul of the world' there is a current of love and a current of hatred—sympathy and antipathy, acceptance and antagonism." *(Eliphas Levi.)*

Any great movement of combined mental forces renders inevitable a movement in the contrary direction sooner or later, although sometimes even centuries may elapse before the more obscure reverse movement may make itself obviously felt in the world. A great impulse forward invites a reactionary impulse in the contrary direction.

To oppose oneself with foolhardiness to a powerful current already begun and rushing on to its climax, is to expose oneself to failure or destruction. The wise man who desires to inaugurate a successful crusade against any popular movement of the day will await evidences of its decline. If he encounters the astral current as it is exhausting itself, he will start another current which will meet with success. It is for this reason that popular movements for the amelioration of earthly conditions of human life either succeed or fail; and that men who have deserved success from the purity and excellence of their motives, and for their self-denying bravery and fortitude in carrying out reforms, often fail, and end their career as martyrs to the cause they hoped to carry through.

Revolutions have their inception in the first acts of tyranny and oppression which invite retribution; but as the oppressed are always the weak, they are doomed to suffer for decades, perhaps centuries, before the popular feelings of resentment gain sufficient strength to successfully counteract the long-existing wrongs.

When thousands of minds are actuated by one feeling they bear all before them like an overwhelming torrent. Men instinctively obey these

laws when desirous of gaining any point, and endeavour to overbear opposition by numbers. They are not aware of the odic strength of combined will-forces, the irresistible power of the magnetic aura they radiate, which compels submission. Their strength lies in the sympathy and harmony of wills, not merely in the numbers of physical bodies which give them expression; the power lies on the astral or mental plane.

The cruel persecution of the Huguenots, which culminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, inaugurated by the diabolical Catherine de Medicis, was only one of a series of wrongs against humanity which sowed the seeds of the French Revolution. As their rulers grew weaker in power from the general contempt and dislike they inspired, and from their own moral weakness growing out of the enervation caused by long-continued success and luxury, the people grew stronger to assert their rights, and at length the mighty flood of retribution set in, sweeping all before it. France has not yet fully shaken off the effects of those terrific crimes against humanity; but whereas she then groaned under a cruel despotism, she is now peaceful, happy, and prosperous under a republican government—her laws made by her people, and the people the safeguards of public honour and virtue. But her blood was shed in three revolutions ere she could accomplish the full circuit of the contrary current of human volition set up in opposition to the tyranny of a despotic government.

Monarchs are crushed between the two contrary forces set in motion by wrongs perpetrated

against humanity, and the inevitable retribution they invite. They pay forfeit with their lives for acts of oppression committed by their predecessors through the lapse of centuries. Storms are long in gathering, but the culminating moment arrives when an explosion of the heaped-up angry forces is necessary to relieve a tension wherein life would become impossible; after which nature smiles with renewed beauty and satisfaction, while happiness reigns everywhere.

Long-continued moral stagnation—the effect of those wrongs which the more powerful selfish minority perpetrate against the majority, powerless for a time to throw off the incubus of oppression—brings about certain conditions in the mental atmosphere which culminate at length in the explosion of psychic forces, like the bursting of storms.

Governments, Churches, topple down before the overwhelming sweep of the reverse currents they excite by injustice, tyranny, oppression. There is ever change, progress, the reversal of wrong for the substitution of right, or equilibrium ; that human life may continue, and evolution advance. As the human soul evolves, attaining higher stages of perfection, the mental as well as physical scenery of its earth-life is continually being changed and modified. Governments, civil and ecclesiastical, are overthrown and pass away, as men's eyes become open to error, and demand that a new order of things shall exist, to suit the new aspect of truth their broader mental expansion enables them to perceive. And this because

truth is infinite as God is, and man cannot learn it all at once, but must gradually grow into its conception as he throws off more and more of self and the world, and approximates himself to God—a long, apparently endless road, but the only one he has to travel.

When mankind drift into error they set up an Astral current, or currents, which would sweep them rapidly into moral destruction; a retrogression into brutedom, when cerecovery and regeneration are almost impossible, necessitating ages of voluntary efforts on the part of each soul to cleanse itself of evil; and frequent returns into flesh bodies, upon the only field of life where the final victory can be obtained. Following out the law of nature, however, a current in one direction renders inevitable a contrary current. Hence the attraction of good opposes itself to evil; enunciated, given forth by some mind in advance of others, whose will works on the side of truth, justice, right, morality: whose conceptions, spiritualised, shed light upon the darkness, and attract congenial minds to higher levels of thought. Thus a wholesome equilibrium is kept up: the intellect is left free to judge for itself between evil and good equally presented before it, and the will decides for itself. Will rules everything, and in its turn is influenced by the imagination, and by auras which have an attractive or repellent effect. The auras of thought permeate the world. Temptation is the psychological effect of a thought-aura, which gradually mesmerises, and subjects or enslaves a weak mind until a species of psychic intoxication

renders mental discrimination impossible, whence ensues the insanity of evil, culminating in diabolical acts.

Sorcery and witchcraft are by no means imaginary things, nor are they the follies of mere superstition. They are real potencies on the side of evil, and have always existed. It is possible to kill a man by projecting upon him the poisonous magnetism of an evil thought. Only the truly good, spiritually uplifted above such a plane of evil by self-purification, are safe from the poisonous auras of evil thoughts. A thought of hatred, a desire to injure, projected upon such an individual, is repelled by the impenetrable positive aura of good which surrounds him as with a wall of brass, and recoils with redoubled potency upon the projector, whose own life becomes poisoned thereby, sometimes to the extent of causing disease or death. In the middle ages the world was fully alive to the diabolical effects of sorcery and witchcraft; and the "Church," aided by the civil laws, tried by persecutions, tortures, and death, to stamp out an evil which had grown to an alarming extent. The "Church," however, possessed a knowledge of the true spiritual science, but from mistaken motives of prudence suppressed the true with the false. Even the wise, who studied the true science with a desire for spiritual progress, and to benefit the human race, fell under the ban of the "Church," and, to preserve their lives, had to assume veils of secresy, hiding the light of their glorious attainments behind a bushel of prudent pretences to escape the prying glances of those who would

have hounded them to death. Meantime the intellect of men grew apace, pushing upwards against the incubus of fanaticism and ecclesiastical authority; and the discoveries of material science threw a powerful light upon the ignorance and erroneous teachings in the cause of religion, of the clergy, who had a certain formula to follow in the instruction of the laity; and who cared for nothing but the power and authority of the Church, which they sought to establish over the whole world, ostensibly carrying out the divine commands.

For centuries have the false persuasions bred in this centre of self-usurped authority, hovered like a darkening fog over minds, forming beings who, like the Cyclops, have had but one mental eye in the middle of their foreheads. Giants, it might be, intellectually, but spiritually, dwarfs. Beings with one material window for their souls, and all the upper storey a blank wall whereto through they never expected to see. For Mother Church, in feeding her children, carefully locked away every scrap of spiritual or occult science which had made the grandeur of ancient religions, and by the knowledge of which the spiritual faculties of mankind could be evolved. But the growth of man's intellect, and the discoveries of science, established a steady current of opposition to the sway of fanaticism, and blind obedience to ecclesiastical authority. The power of the "Church" has steadily declined; but men have drifted into materialism, strengthened by the discoveries of science, and the teachings of philosophies which deal only with the physical, objec-

tive, or apparent side of nature. Modern scientists have traced life to the very verge of the material universe, and there, finding a wall impenetrable to material sight, and to the mind schooled to depend only upon the functions of a material brain, they stop short, and decree that they have established the fact that life, energy, the vital forces, have their *origin* in the "molecular motion of matter." They have failed to discover what lies behind the molecular motion of matter; that matter is the vehicle of spirit, and capable of sublimation until it is lost in *spirit*, or energy, or force, if they prefer so to term it. That there is Cosmic Mind; a Universal Soul; a world of ethereal matter; and that *thought* is of that ethereal substance in which spirit first clothes itself for form-manifestation to lower minds. Having advanced so far, material science must stop until pushed on by spiritual science, which momentum it already begins to feel. A mouse, says the fable, once liberated a lion from a net, and for the last forty or fifty years an obscure centre of spiritual investigation has been nibbling away at the meshes of materialism which hamper the movements of lordly science; and one day it will bound forth in freedom; not to raven and destroy, but with true brotherly love, seeking the spiritual advancement of the whole human race.

To return to ecclesiastical matters, how did Nature more especially answer the self-appointed directress of human evolution; who would be God and Nature in one, and absolve or condemn, release or enchain, by human fiat; make, and give

out to the world the very decrees of God Himself; and establish the goal, the halting place, the end, or finishing-point of human progress? Irrepressible Nature—whose work of the spiritual evolution of souls goes on in spite of "Churches," or material science, or earthly laws—has continued to produce souls purified of material grossness, whose faculties transcended those of lower progression; souls whose transfigured bodies were but the most fragile encumbrances, through which the astral or psychic man or woman asserted itself by super-human powers, which ignorance called "miracle." Then the "Church," unable to dissemble facts when they were displayed within her purlieus, took these highly favoured ones into her sanctuaries, called them her "Saints," and inscribed their names in her rubrics as those of petty deities to be worshipped on certain days. But when officious Nature would display her psychic treasures outside the pale of Mother Church, as happened continually, the cry went out: "It is the devil!"—"Magic!"—"Witchcraft!"

The powers of human magnetism, of a purified will working for the good of humanity, and sending forth an odic force which swayed subject forces, and re-established order where disorder had reigned, were recognised as the miraculous powers bestowed by God upon His "*faithful.*" But let a "heretic" display the same power, and it was "of the devil!" That noble science which by training could hasten the somewhat precocious evolution of the superior powers of the soul was anathematised as infernal, and con-

signed to oblivion. Wherever its votaries could be discovered they were persecuted, imprisoned, subjected to torture, murdered. Thus by the cruel foot of ecclesiastical imbecility the pure white flower of the soul's growth was stamped into the mud of denial, and a shape, a phantasm of evil created, which imprinted itself upon minds and bred a distemper of hallucination.

For the sake of retaining power and domination, the ecclesiastical despotism which usurped the name and functions of "the Church," suppressed all knowledge of pure occult science; that "magic" which had been a term of highest honour to distinguish the transcendent powers of the Magi—the Wise of the earth—the kings and priests of humanity. The great powers wielded by a Moses, by the holy Prophets, and afterwards by a Jesus, were the attainment of lives of ascetic purity and self-conquest, establishing the fact of the supremacy of the spiritual soul over the illusory, transitory medium of physical life called "Matter." The priests of ancient temples were trained, and initiated, when proved worthy, into the carefully protected arcana which conferred similar powers. To selfishness, to self-indulgence, to passion, to folly, these majestic qualifications of the evolved spiritual man were denied —were, in short, unattainable. It became impossible for a band of arrogant egoists, resolved to reign without divine permission over the spiritual destinies of mankind, to reach such a point of spiritual greatness, and it was convenient to deny such powers as existent in any other body of people, or to falsely depict them as the

very opposite to what they were—that is to say, as the *perversion* of the powers of the soul to evil practices, the *outraging* of nature in her spiritual sanctuaries by a human will seeking only selfish gratification and dominance to injure or destroy.

Every good has its opposite, its possible perversion. The perversion of pure and holy magic is demonolatry, sorcery, witchcraft. Against this "left-hand path," conducting to the darkness of a hell (the self-incurred condition of suffering of those spiritual suicides who have persistently turned upside down all nature's holy intentions in their behalf)—against such evil practices Moses, the Hierophant, the initiate, and leader of the Israelites, put forth his most stringent and stern commands.

Owing to the extreme purity and spirituality of being and of life essential to the *legitimate* attainment of these great powers, the isolation and the severity of the ordeals to be passed by the neophyte, it was not possible for the majority to seek them; nor, indeed, were the precious arcana to be exposed to public knowledge. In the first place, they could not have understood them, and in their ignorance they would have violated and desecrated them. It was always possible for the unpurified, the carnal and passionate, to obtain certain lower and spurious powers, and these were ever pit-falls to the ignorant *oi polloi*, who, dazzled by the false glamour of this mundane appearance of superhuman powers, gave themselves up without discrimination to seek them in others, or to obtain

them for themselves. This has always been the danger, that the unpurified physical man, the arrogance of whose egotism will make him grasp at anything which may seem to exalt him, allured by the flattering possibility of an almost supreme potency passing into his hands by a degraded and evil magic, at length despises the means which are necessary to obtain the *lawful* qualifications, and descends step by step on the downward path.

The most horrible rites are essential in the practice of black magic. Cruelty, malignity, and hatred of humanity and of all good characterise its votaries. They become demonised, and dying, pass into the astral condition, or state of existence, where they give out a poisonous exhalation, which depraved mortals attract to themselves, and by which they are too apt to become enveloped and obsessed to the complete suffocation of all spiritual life. Especially is this the case when the sensual or vicious man begins to tamper with occult science, and tries to obtain unlawful powers.

There are large numbers of black magicians in India, usually called *Black Tantrikas*. These men wield considerable powers of evil. The most powerful go about in the astral form, and are always interposing their influence wherever they discover a man or woman seeking occult knowledge, *i.e.*, the means of transcending the material plane for spiritual progression. They flatter, deceive, and tempt, until—if the aspirant's intentions be pure and good—they are found out, when, being resisted, they disappear; but the more unpurified and sensual the seeker after

spiritual gifts, the more difficult it is to get rid of these wily assailants. They are a very dangerous element in the world, and are the cause of more evil than can be imagined. They may be called "evil spirits," for their work is of that kind. They link themselves with the powers of evil, soliciting and obtaining the aid of powerful "elementals"—beings, or existences, or creatures, inhabiting that world which is invisible to material sight; which have never been men, and, in some instances, never may so become. These are classed for convenience under the generic name of "elementals." Invisible space is peopled with them, and their functions in the economy of nature are of the widest usefulness. They are of various grades and powers. There are good elementals, others of a negative harmlessness, and some diabolically malignant and dangerous. No man is ever free from their association, and his atmosphere is peopled with a kind suited to the character of his thoughts—innocent and pure, or the contrary. Black magicians, or sorcerers, obtain the aid of "elementals" of a fearful and horrible nature, which become subject to them *for a time*, but eventually turn upon them and destroy them. Evoking his elemental, a *Tantrika* may so "concentrate his attention and regard upon it for purposes of black magic and Tantric worship, that at length his whole individuality is transferred to it, and he becomes, as it were, sucked up into it. He then lives in such a being, and after death *is* such a being,"—a "devil" in short; his own soul being lost. This would be the extreme opposite point and condition to that

of the divine-spiritual man who becomes one with the Logos, but never loses his individuality. The man who enters upon the path of black magic gradually descends "from steep to steep of lust and infamy, until nature can bear the strain no longer, and he perishes in appalling torment, or is destroyed by his incensed contemporaries." *(The Theosophist.)*

The world was once pervaded by this perversion of the psychic powers inherent in man; and throughout all the eastern nations the practice of a magic, more or less black, is still prevalent. It is sneered at, discredited, and called superstitious ignorance by the more intellectual Westerns; but it is, nevertheless, a natural phenomenon arising from the inter-relations of the spiritual and material worlds, which is misunderstood, misdirected, and perverted through ignorance. In the West it has lingered in obscurity amongst the lower, ignorant classes; but is always suppressed and punished by law if it ever crops up offensively. But it is no more possible to stamp it out than it would be to stamp out the soul of man. Under the very noses of magistrates, in spite of the terrors of the law, it persistently asserts itself, because it is in the nature of man. If it does not take the objectionable form of witchcraft and sorcery it will take some other form more consonant with the demands of refined society, and escape persecution under the protection of some new name. The only way to destroy it is by spiritualising the education of man, by teaching him the right and legitimate way of exercising the psychical faculties which are a portion of his organism. The

exercise of those ignored potencies of man's nature must always more or less tend to evil, until he becomes truly spiritual, having conquered the lower self, and stands unassailable in the strength of his own purity.

The knowledge of the power which man may exercise over the universal medium of life, the "astral light," the "azoth" of the ancients; "od," or magnetic fluid of the moderns, is a revival of an ancient science which is still possessed and practised in the East.

The manipulation according to Will of this wonderful life-agent, it can be seen at a glance, would place in the hands of men a super-human power. Fortunately it is a knowledge which in its higher and more god-like forms, cannot be seized upon by the desecrating hand of the profaner. It has to be worked for by the elimination of every base and low element in the nature of man.

This knowledge in its higher aspects is the key-note of the harmony of the spheres, the nucleus and kernel of all spiritual science, the wonderful medium of Magic. It is the beneficent instrument for life and health wielded by the thaumaturgist; the source of the god-like powers of the holy, purified Initiate or Priest of Nature, the White Magician.

The symbolical forms under which this mysterious agent, this double current of the astral light, this living fire of the earth, was represented in ancient theogonies are too numerous to mention. The double serpent of the *caduceus*, the serpent of Genesis, the serpent with the head

of a bull, a goat, or a dog, as well as the brazen serpent entwined about the *Tau* which Moses lifted before the reverential gaze of the Israelites, are some amongst these representative forms. To obtain the power of a divine mastery over this subtle force, a man must stand its conqueror *in himself.* As a natural medium it is active and seductive to an indolent or negative will, and in this respect is appropriately represented under the form of the tempting serpent of Genesis. Its controller, in the person of a man who has conquered it, would seem to hold it doubly entwined about a wand before which all forces would bow obedient. Such a man must be a stranger to *passion*, which word implies a *passive* state; whereas the magician is ever active and victorious, positive and all-subduing. This exalted spiritual condition is beautifully symbolised under the form of a radiant angel restraining and holding a dragon beneath his foot and lance; and by the woman crushing the head of the serpent beneath her foot.

The head and front of all *Divine Magic*, then, consists in disengaging oneself from the folds of the serpent; to hold him enchained and obedient to our will. "I will give thee," said the tempter in the evangelical myth, "all the kingdoms of the earth if thou wilt fall down and adore me!" — "I will neither fall down nor adore" should be the answer of the Initiate—"but thou shalt be subject into me, to yield what I will; to obey and to serve; for behold! I am thy Lord and Master!"

The arcane mysteries concerning the powers

and effects of the astral light, as enshrined in that noble, but despised and forgotten ancient science of divine magic, would completely explain the at present misunderstood marvels of the spiritistic *séance;* and every other inexplicable and bewildering manifestation of occult forces which set the vulgar and ignorant agape with wonder, with awe, or fright.

The extraordinary outbreak in modern western society of what are called "spiritual phenomena" is one of the replies of nature to the suppression of spiritual knowledge in the Churches, and the consequent enormous growth of materialism in the world. It is also a reflex action of the astral currents set in motion by the persecution of witches in America, England and other countries. America and England have both an evil *Karma* therein to work off. We shall see how they will accomplish their task. They can no longer drown, hang, nor burn witches and sorcerers. Mankind has grown out of that folly and brutality.

To make amends for their past sins, they should bring their highest intellects to the study of spiritual science, discovering the *true cause* of the wonder-phenomena evoked in their midst. If they fail to do this, they will but grow a crop of abnormally sensitive *psychic inebriates*, like those of former times; not now to be tortured out of existence, but to extend, without any hindrance but the good sense and wisdom of the world, a new species of mental disorder, borrowing its hallucinations from the active, overt interposition of that crew of irresponsible entities*

* Elementals.

which infest our unclean physical world. Without knowledge of the power they would wield, without spiritualisation of the inner nature, their sensitives would but become the subjects of an astral intoxication which springs from the concurrence of astral forces unequilibrated, and needing a strong enlightened will to bring them into a proper balance. It is from this unbalanced psychic force, misunderstood, and as yet an awe-inspiring supernaturalism to ignorant minds—a power which never transcends the plane of earthly mentality—proceeding from beings who are not endowed with moral responsibility, that certain puzzling irregularities of moral teachings and conduct have so repeatedly floated out upon the stream of Spiritistic society, to which the weakest vessels, the negative sensitives, usually fall the first victims. How often is the faithful Spiritist made to stand aghast at the detection of imposture in mediums of well-known and well-tested powers; and to mourn over the moral defection of others, wondering meanwhile, good, honest soul! how it can be so? "Why do the good spirits permit it; or not prevent it?" Does not all this point to the presence and lawless activity of a force semi-intelligent and irresponsible, which men know not how to control, but which controls them to their defeat and disgrace? The same force which controls all men when they do not master it in themselves, taking up a *positive* position against evil, and maintaining their mental equilibrium. It is a law of nature. Elementals float in the stream of astral forces; indeed they are the forces themselves, as it were,

—embodying them. There is no *formless* void in nature; and we cannot say *what* forms are assumed, nor how much, nor how little intelligence may be displayed, and consciousness experienced by the infinite multitude of shapes, visible or invisible, assumed by nature in the different degrees of matter more or less tenuous. We are becoming acquainted with the dynamic power of thought: thought is a force: evil is a force as well as good. By his thought, by his will, man draws into himself the force of good or evil; man himself is embodied force, or energy. If he passively yields himself to every, or any, influences which may be floating around him, he acts like an idiot, and becomes a prey to wandering astral entities, who fasten upon him, and impel him in any direction. He weakens his judgment, destroys his reason, and loses all the vivid brightness of his intellect. At the very outset of Modern Spiritism the cardinal error was committed of making *passivity* the *ne plus ultra* of mediumship. A dogma which rightly considered, would indicate the presence, as its chief instigator, of some occult power—perhaps embodied in the personality of a *Tantrika*—the very opposite to that which would be desirable; a power which would desire, and seek the gradual enslavement and destruction of mankind.

To attempt to wield the unknown force of the astral light, or of astral entities, without knowledge, is to seize the tail of a wriggling serpent, which is sure to fly back and sting the operator through the weak places of a moral coat of mail, whose imperfect construction exposes him to

such attacks. A fundamental tenet of the *true* science, upon whose outskirts Spiritists as yet do but hover, teaches the absolute necessity of gaining the mastery over this inscrutable, vivacious, subtle, contradictory psychic force, which, when tamed, is servilely obedient and harmless.

Communion with beings of the next *contiguous* world, whether overt or tacit, can elevate no one who does not seek primarily to elevate himself. And that is one reason why Spiritism has its dark side, which degenerates into mere fortune-telling, the consulting of other-world beings upon matters pertaining to the commonest daily routine of life, business, money-speculations, horse-racing, and other matters of a lower kind still. But this is *not Spiritualism.* It is its degradation, a return to the sorcery of the past dark ages, a consulting of those "familiar spirits" against which Moses warned the Israelites. It is that sort of degraded Spiritism which is carried on, to their moral and spiritual detriment, by the more ignorant portions of Eastern nations. The intellectual Western races must rise superior to this sort of thing. And Spiritualists of the higher mental type already do. They are, however, as yet unable to suppress it amongst the immense multitude who have recently joined their ranks in every part of the world; hence these malpractices crop up in a most offensive manner wherever Spiritism has been accepted as a fact. It is the sensual man seeking sensual gratification and self-advancement.

The mere seeking of phenomena, that incessant hankering after mere sense-gratification, of

witnessing or hearing, of seeing or feeling the novel and extraordinary manifestations of next-world entities cannot possibly have an elevating effect upon mankind. A man is not elevated unless he elevates himself. He must lift himself out of the ruck of this world, and above the *reflected* uncleannesses of the astral world. But there are some natures which never achieve this, nor can they. They are of the same type as those whose religion gratifies them most when it appeals more particularly to the senses: by music, by the perfumes of incense, by pictures, by processions, by flaring lights, by ceremonial shows of gorgeously-robed priests, if not by the loud singing of hymns in the public streets.

It must be borne in mind that the astral world —that plane of soul-life *nearest* our earth— receives the reflection of our mental world, and we must expect from it only imperfections and impurities. The "elementals" who will crowd at our call to do what we desire will reflect to us our own ideas. If we be of what may be termed a high intellectual type for earth—as it is at present—they can bring us of the highest that is reflected in the astral light. If we are of a low type, loving buffoonery, coarse jokes, the extremes of sensuality, they will answer us with a disgusting pandemonium, calling themselves by the names of celebrities of ancient or modern times. As, for instance, Demosthenes has been supposed to return to earth, but unfortunately teaching a form of degrading licentiousness; and Cornelius Agrippa interesting himself warmly in the election of a Lord Mayor of London.

Education in the secret workings of the forces so stupidly, blunderingly, and sometimes wickedly invoked, would clear off this moral scum, and leave the pure waters of a legitimate cultivation of the powers of the soul like a deep, placid, crystal-clear lake, wherein would be seen reflected the loveliness of a heaven above.

We must right our position as regards the next world if we wish to understand our relations with it. What we may expect from it depends entirely upon our moral and spiritual status. It is like the most delicate of thermometers, which would exactly indicate our spiritual temperature, whether we be hot or cold; ardent or lukewarm; positive or negative; religious hypocrites or fanatics; or earnest truth-seekers, truth-*livers*, enfranchised from the bondages of false dogmas, and spiritually aspiring to rise into a knowledge of the Higher Self, which is that ideal, that model we have to evolve from within, as the sculptor works out his beautiful ideal from the block of inanimate stone, making it like a living, breathing similitude—the only difference being that our higher self *is* a living entity when we come to *know it*. We must aspire to *true* spiritual altitudes if we wish to reach them; but we must not think we have reached them at the first step into the astral world. That world is of a matter still so gross, although far more ethereal than ours, that it is only filled with comparatively gross beings qualified to live in such a consistency of matter. They are only a degree less material than ourselves; therefore it is easy for them to manifest on our plane. It is for us alone to regulate or

rule the nature of those appearances. Doubtless as we grow into a knowledge of the true state of the case, which will approximate us to their condition, they will find it easier to manifest. But let us *beware of that time*, lest a flood of evil overwhelm us, who are still probationers struggling to conquer matter, which means *evil* for the spiritual man. We *must* be the masters, the rulers, and directors of the *character* of these appearances or manifestations. As humanity on earth ascends really into higher intellectual and spiritual conditions, *that* world must inevitably become purer, for it is filled from our world; and men on earth are the creators of that *elemental* world which *immediately surrounds them.*

Spiritualism or occultism is no small subject; but one as vast, as various, and inexhaustible as the universe. But of our first steps we should be well assured, and filled with a due sense of their importance. Men toy and amuse themselves with the phenomena produced by the aid of mediums; but they do not at all reflect upon the stupendous consequences for the whole human race which lie wrapt up in them. How great, then, the responsibility which rests upon each one to try to spread the light of truth concerning these subjects, that men may be forewarned and forearmed against possible errors which lead into danger.

It is by no means the first time in the history of the world that an extraordinary influx of misunderstood forces out of the region of matter of greater tenuity has astounded and bewildered ignorant man. But it is probably the first time

that these abnormal manifestations of existences on the other side of our veil of thicker matter have ever met with a general and intelligent investigation on the part of the inhabitants of our planet. Neither is it surprising that many mistakes should be made concerning it; nor that men should form opinions upon the subject suited to the present stage of their education; and as these later manifestations have occurred more especially in Christian countries, that they should be prejudged from ideas associated with the teachings of Christianity. A living force inhabits a neighbouring region of animate existence, which is continually manifesting itself abnormally, bursting through the veils which hide it from gross physical senses. And the time has arrived, in the progression of man's intellect, for the universal comprehension of this state of existence. It is no longer to be the exclusive attainment of a select number of the most exalted minds to understand this recondite subject; but it is to be a common possession of universal knowledge for the future safety and guidance of man, so long the victim of his own ignorant hallucinations; a knowledge imperatively demanded by the necessities of his evolution.

To re-establish equilibrium in the mental growth of mankind, that they should not perish by the complete negation of spiritual life, a re-actionary current is making itself felt, which will eventually bring human evolution into a more perfect harmony with the intentions of nature. Spontaneous ebullitions of astral existence, or life on a stage of greater substantial tenuity than ours, are borne in

upon the plane of matter more dense, exciting comment, and awakening intelligent inquiry. The dividing line, which exists only in man's grosser senses, is at such times leapt over, and the physical man is suddenly aroused to a sense of an additional mode of existence for himself, which he has always looked upon with that awe we give to the unknown, calling it supernatural, when it is only super-physical.

Imagine a man's eyes suddenly opened to full unobstructed gaze upon the wonders of the natural world in the region of ethereal, diaphanous matter, wherein his soul already lives, and in whose atmosphere it breathes. At once he would see the *causes* of many things which now puzzle him, and the mysteries at the back of those will-forces he calls "*Spirits*" would be revealed. The body man wears is but the symbolical figure of his soul, projected by his will upon the plane of gross matter. His real home is not so much this outer objective world, as that world of mind from which he is continually throwing into outer similitude the creations of his brain, which is the vehicle of all his power; wherefrom branches out every possible function of his organism. Upon the outer objective plane, appearances, similitudes of things mystical, subjective, are continually tripping up his unspiritualised reason; and for him—the unspiritual physical man—mysteries, marvels unexplored, continue to exist. With a child-like faith he believes in the direct interposition of a personal God in sublunary affairs. He has mentally localised, peopled, and furnished with appropriate scenery

and objects, the fantastic heaven of his untutored earth-crawling imagination ; for he transports to the world he dreams of, only the representative forms to which his grosser senses become habituated on earth. He does not at all consider that as he mentally and spiritually ascends higher, into truer and more exact knowledge, everything will be as much changed for him as the world changes for the child who leaves his toys and sports of fancy, burlesquing adult life, behind him in the nursery. Hence his sentimentalising, idealising, unprogressed faith tells him that from behind the dark curtain spread by his gross physical senses between him and the next plane of life, God has sent troops of "angels" who rap, disturb the furniture of his rooms, waft cool breaths of air upon his face, even stroke and caress him with materialised hands ; write upon his slates with invisible fingers, and build themselves up from *nothing*—as it appears to him—into bodies of flesh again. Upon these grounds has been gradually built up a very pretty theory of "angelic communion" which is about as near being correct as the theory that the sun travels round the earth. The "angels" do not descend to man ; this is an appearance only ; they lift him to themselves, *by his road of spiritual evolution.* Man himself pushes aside, in his spiritual growth, all the gross obstructions which intervene, and at length the light dawns from that higher stage of human existence full upon his soul, and he may see and converse, in his more exalted moments, with those who really deserve the name of "angels." But it is he, qualified by spiritual

evolution to *rise* into such a state, who has a psychical approximation into such harmonious relations with higher spiritual beings that he is, for the time being, *actually on their mental plane*, and conscious of their presence. His imagination may give them an external objectivity, and from ignorance of the true state of the case, he thinks they come down to him. Space, *as we know it*, is but an earthly appearance ; it changes its aspect as we change our conditions ; and there is in reality no "down" nor "up." As nature has already produced her divine-spiritual men, who have ascended into their glory—as we say—it is very certain that the earth must always possess progressing inhabitants of more or less spirituality, who are qualified to enter into "rapport," more or less perfect, with those called "angels." Were it not so, the divine purposes for human life would be abortive.

Whilst still trammelled in the flesh, that is, that it is still unconquered, with little or no spiritual growth, such an approximation is impossible to man. His visitors, in such case, are merely of the next plane contiguous to earth ; a variable, volatile, simulative crew ; or, on the other hand, *defunct personalities* who are linked with him by the laws of homogeneity, and find a certain comfort in such sympathy. "The astral light"—says Eliphas Levi—"directs the instincts of animals, but offers a field of combat to the intelligence of man, which it tends to pervert by the luxury of its reflections, and the deceptiveness of its images—a fatal but necessary action, which tempting spirits—*elementaries*, or souls in pain—

direct, and render more fatal still; their inquietude and wretchedness driving them to seek a certain sympathy with our weaknesses; and they tempt us more with the desire to find that we are friends" (or congenial) "than to compass our downfall." "Elementaries" is a term applied to souls which still retain the elementary conditions of their earth lives; or those lower principles which hang together for some time in the astral sphere after the higher animating principles have separated and entered upon a more spiritual existence.

Modern Spiritism has built up for itself a fairy palace as frangible as glass, which the strong winds of spiritual science will blow to the four points of the compass one of these days. But at the same time, the underlying truths, the facts, the imperishable pearls gained by souls in their struggles upward to supernal light will remain. Truth lies at the back of appearances, as in the stone kicked away by our feet a gleam of pure ore will draw attention to the riches of an adjacent unexplored mine. So this flood of psychic phenomena, upon whose waves are seen the golden gleams of many a truth, reveals the action of unknown natural laws, inviting man to explore and make himself eternally rich in spiritual science. It arrests attention, pointing to the highest facts of a life beyond the present, and has a luring fascination for minds unhampered by prejudice, and for those souls already so enfranchised from the trammels of matter that they are ruled by an imperative demand of nature for the more active exercise of their dormant

psychic faculties. The whole world responds to the impetus of this powerful astral current, which increases daily in volume and force, until it will at length sweep the whole of humanity into the vast ocean of spiritual knowledge it embraces. But with it comes also, for discerning eyes, that light which will enable the calmly-reasoning man to discriminate between truth and falsehood, safety and danger, wisdom and folly. Early mistakes and misconceptions must give place to the truer knowledge which comes from the *legitimate exercise* of the psychic faculties, from the exaltation of the soul *above* the astral regions —the mid-world of semi-ethereality wherein still linger the crude thought-images of minds chained to the earth.

Nature, by this mysterious outburst upon the plane of gross matter, of the activity of the veiled inner or causal life, whose more regular manifestations in the objective world are our daily experience, invites man to rouse himself from the lethargic dream of centuries, wherein all the powers of his soul were being lulled into a death-like trance of dangerous spiritual stagnation; wherein mankind has been growing more and more corrupt, as proved by the prevalence of moral rottenness in the world, the increase of crime and vice, of insanity, and suicide.

As there has been an extensive cultivation of the purely intellectual faculties to the almost total exclusion of the higher, more interior attributes pertaining to the only principles in man which really survive, so there is a reactionary impulse in nature to counteract the

destructive tendencies arising from an imperfect or one-sided education.

That which seems spontaneous to the gross senses of unspiritual man is by no means so, but connected by a long chain of causal precedents, which disappear ultimately into the depths of arcane nature. In childlike ignorance he accepts as correct the first reason for a thing happening which presents itself. It is probably the proximate cause ; but there are others beyond, which if known, would throw a different complexion upon the first in presentation. Raps which betray an intention in responsive sequence to questions proposed, indicate a living intelligence which seeks to make its presence known. There are, however, so many unknown, inexplicable, grotesque, and unmanageable causes which operate from that still unexplored, and almost unexplorable next-door neighbour of sensuous humanity—the astral world—that to ascribe *all* replies to questions addressed to the inhabitants of that region as proceeding from defunct relatives becomes a dangerously misleading hypothesis. That wonderfully fecund element, that ocean of apparently spontaneous life in which float myriads of shapes, existences perpetually attracted towards the plane of sensuous objectivation, is afforded an outlet through human beings who, by a peculiarity of constitution, or habits of life, or disease, present a sort of looser adherence of the seven principles which, according to the teachings of ancient eastern philosophy, make up the complex being called man. A perfectly-balanced constitution and mind, making up a

perfectly healthy and normal man or woman, presents a more difficult barrier of penetration for those forces which, in an orderly way, are continually pressing outwards by normal means, and thus harmoniously effecting an entrance upon the ultimate plane of dense matter in the birth and growth of every natural object. When favourable conditions present, on account of some weakness or defect in the barriers of the next degree they must penetrate, there ensues a sort of convulsive outburst, or a trickling through interstices, like the action of a pent-up stream. Of this character are the projecting of stones through the air by invisible means, the noises, moving, and breaking of furniture in houses, and the hysterical excesses to which certain individuals are at times subject—like the *Convulsionaires de St. Médard*, and other instances of a similar nature.

In that contiguous region of more ethereal life are to be found existences man has always termed supernatural; and which he has peopled with fays, his departed ancestors, and demons. From that region he receives all his terrors, all his delights; and upon it, as upon a transparent veil, he projects the mental images he is continually evolving, whether of good or evil, of beauty or ugliness. His memories live around him in actual forms; his mental calculations, his thought-processes of the most minute and varied kind, are indelibly inscribed in that diaphanous element, the astral light, and from it may be brought into actual, vivid presentation by any adjacent will-power so determined. A man's aura, his soul's

absorbent and reflectant atmosphere, is thus a life-mirror in which may be read every secret of his mind; and this is continually open to the vision of any astral visitant who may desire or be invited to explore it. In it are indelibly photographed the faces of those he has loved or been associated with; and events of which his time-personality, as yet, knows nought, are already *present* with the astral half of himself, whose existence has no connection with time except by the earthly organism. Therefore he should be prepared at any moment, if he seeks communion with the denizens of the next world, to receive any number of "*tests*," as they are called, of identity, from operators at "the other end of the line," who represent themselves, whether truly or not, to be the beloved he has lost.

If these relatives or friends have been the victims of accident, or committed suicide, they have to wear out in the next stage of existence the period of life they would otherwise have lived upon the earth had nothing occurred to cut it short. If, for instance, a man or woman, destined to reach the age of eighty or ninety years had been killed at the age of twenty, they would linger in the earth's attraction for sixty or seventy years ere passing finally through that change essential to reach the plane of subjective rest. Such persons (who are, if recently deceased, *full* personalities, not "elementaries") can, and do, communicate with friends on earth. But it is quite possible for them, at any time, to be personated; and "tests of identity," for the reasons before stated, can easily be given by the per-

sonator. If, however, the victims of accident be young, pure, and innocent, they pass into a condition of dreamful slumber, which is a blissfully happy state, in which they seem to themselves to mingle with their loved ones, unconscious of the sudden interruption to the earth-life. They continue in this slumberous rest until the full period of the earth-life has been exhausted, when they go into a higher and more spiritual state; or, if the life had been too short to lay up any store of good, they become re-incarnated, to continue the spiritual evolution so summarily interrupted. These are not in a condition to communicate; they never descend into the lower, merely astral principles of their organism, and are perfectly unconscious of the earth and its attraction.

The state of existence next ours, still in the aura of the earth, is filled by human beings in different stages of transition between the earth-life and the heaven, or *rest*-life; and it is highly questionable whether to chain these souls to earth by continually inviting communion, thereby renewing and strengthening that which they ought, in an orderly way, to *shell off* more and more, is as good for them, *or for us*, as it is the pleasure of Spiritists to imagine. A sort of second or vicarious earth-life is opened to them through mediums. If they have been sensual, sinful beings, cut off in the full flush of their earthly passions, they are enticed back into the old scenes; their thirst for objective, sensual existence is re-excited, and they gratify again their earthly yearnings and lusts through a living proxy. They

become the demons of thirst, gluttony, cruelty; they may provoke their victims to the most horrible crimes, and revel in their commission. These are the *obsessors*, the *incubi*, and *succubi* of mediæval times: and again of *these times*, if men choose to have it so. They incur a frightful retribution, that may be, so far as we know, tenfold intensified in spiritual sufferings.

It can surely be no kindness to afford opportunities for a renewal of earthly life to those who retain a residuum of materiality greater than the amount of spirituality gained during the life on earth. It may end in their losing *all* spirituality: whilst the medium's life, by such intercourse, is not elevated, but rather the reverse.

It is quite possible that this necessity of getting rid of earthly associations and inclinations comes home to many of the communicating entities; for the messages frequently tell of their "going up higher"—or that such and such a personality "cannot communicate any longer," etc., etc., having become *too* spiritual; from the fact, perhaps, that they have passed into the final change of all ere entering into the abode of rest. A wider knowledge of these subjects, and a truer conception of what *spirituality* really means and is, would render impossible the gross mistakes that are now often made.

There is a pure and elevated psychism,—if we may so term it,—in contradistinction to *mediumism*, a term more especially descriptive of that condition which opens a door for *all* comers without distinction from the next world. This *indiscriminate* mediumship is much to be deprecated;

and there is no actual advance in true spirituality of nature for those who indulge in it. Are such individuals, in the ordinary course, anyways remarkable for refined purity of nature or habits of life? Are they more free than their neighbours from excesses of temper, malice, hatred, greed, evil-speaking, etc., etc.? We think not. Where then is the progress in true spirituality? Can there be any true progress when it is thought essential they should live in a state of subjection to other minds, *i.e.*, in the *passive* state? And when they are not held responsible for what it is supposed the "spirits" *make* them do? Surely this is reversing all nature's laws for the progress of man—for the evolution of intellect, reason, spirituality.

When Spiritists have settled down from the excitement of novelty in the subjects they have taken up; when the weaker vessels amongst them have ceased to be greedy after sensational surprises, over which they now fall into raptures of wonder, this sort of mediumship will be suffered to die out. At present the generality of Spiritists are more intent upon materialising spirit than spiritualising matter, and rather deserve to be called "materialistic phenomenalists" than *true spiritualists.*

As we said above, there is a pure and elevated psychism. There are souls on earth arrived at a sufficient spiritual exaltation to be in open, conscious communion with beings risen above all possibility of material existence, who are what may be called, *par excellence*, "Spirits." Only, individuals who have reached this stage do not

frequent the *séance-room;* nor seek communion by any earthly means. Their communion is entirely mental, and of a character they do not reveal to the world. A higher plane of mentality is opened to their consciousness—a condition inexplicable to one who has never experienced it. And with a humility and reverence which is the essential outgrowth of their superior knowledge, and complete self-purification, they never obtrude their earthly personality into such communion, but are themselves at such moments in a transcendent condition of existence.

We have wished in what has been said above merely to point out the difference between the two kinds of communion. The one is still of the earth, mixed with earthly events and incidents, and has to do with unpurified lingerers in the astral regions—earth-walkers; and with that vast body of fluidic forces, or semi-material entities called "elementals," which are drawn by the superior power of some dominant will, and adapt themselves precisely to the mental conditions they find paramount. The other is clear open sight and hearing, as through an open door, of a soul risen *above* the astral region by the force of its own spiritual growth: a condition attained (or begun) by evolution, in nearly all cases, in *some former life*, obtaining increase and fruition in the present life. Such persons generally experience what might be termed a superior "spiritual call," to which the depths of their whole being responds; which seems to set them, from that moment, apart from others, necessitating a line of life which frequently brings upon them only mis-

fortunes and sufferings of a personal kind. In short, they have to make the last sacrifices, and their struggles are often of the severest. They are, nevertheless, conscious of what is being done for them, and in some cases, watch their own inward growth, and note the progress made. They are gradually lifted from state to state of superior illumination, and receive, in some instances, direct *viva voce* counsel, encouragement, comfort, and instruction in things of the spirit—and this without the slightest apparent change or difference in their external mode of life, which pursues its even tenor before the world, the whilst the most momentous transactions (*for the soul*) are being enacted on a superior plane. They intuitively *feel* the character of any inharmonious or disturbing entity which may approach from the "world of shades," and instinctively guard themselves in an interior manner. They seek nothing from the next world except by aspiration to the highest, which might be termed a state of perpetual, increasing prayer.

To voluntarily and rashly break down every barrier between ourselves and the state of existence to which we are *soul-blinded* is to expose ourselves, without the protection of knowledge, to the most insidious, malignant, deceptive, and crushing influences and powers ; the whole combative and aggressive paraphernalia of other earthly minds there projected ; which seethe and writhe in that atmosphere, and blindly fasten themselves with the virulence of mental cancers upon any new field of thought which may be thrown open to them. Man's *normal* progression

upon the sensuous or physical plane, according to the laws of nature thrown round him as a protection from the astral evils and dangers ignorant humanity creates for itself, would, if not interfered with, gradually introduce him, by mental and spiritual evolution, to a knowledge of his invisible surroundings ; and teach him how legitimately to deal with them, disarm them of malevolence, quell them, repel and master them ; and also ascend, by the power of the emancipated spirit, far above them. *And this is exactly what it is intended man should grow into.*

When nature throws upon the field of human life the golden apples which invite pursuit, she cannot at once reveal that evil which is the shadow of every good ; nor the dangers which are always the reverse of the pleasures and advantages thus bestowed. If she did so, evolution by the painful lessons of experience would be lost. With every new discovery of nature's secrets, man suffers from the effects of forces thus newly liberated until he learns to manipulate and control them. All forces impinge upon the sensuous plane from the spiritual plane; that is, the unknown, invisible plane from which bursts sound, fire, light, breath, growth—in short, life in its multifarious forms ; and back to that plane rush the causal forces when their period of objectivation is over ; when ignorant man thinks "there is an end of it!" We think the "fire goes out"—"light is put out"—"animals are killed or die"—"men die" : they disappear from our sight, hearing, and touch, and we think there is no more of them ; they are utterly gone. It is

not so : they only change their field of existence, their mode of manifestation, passing under the control of other laws. Were the ears of our souls opened, we should hear the prolongation in the astral light, of every sound which dies out and away from the material ear. We might indeed "hear the plants grow"; we might hear the *maëstro's* beautiful thought-creations in music as they float from his brain into the regions of his soaring fancy : hear the very thought-speech of absent friends, and confer with them, space being no hindrance.

> "There is not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims :
> *Such harmony is in immortal souls ;*
> But while this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly hem us in, we cannot hear it."

"Spiritistic phenomena," as they are called, *may* be produced by the powers of "Black Magic," and this should now no longer be a subject of doubt, when we call to mind the wonderful achievements of certain Fakirs of India (*vide* M. Jacolliot) and some of the half-savage races on the earth. The only wonder is that the large body of people at present dabbling in Spiritual Science have not been struck by this fact of similarity of production, and of the means they employ to bring about these abnormal effects to those employed by lower races of mankind—that is to say, by the formation of powerful magnetic currents from a concurrence of will-forces, and the chaunting, singing of hymns, which are like incantations ; or *mantras*, which attract the

"elementals," and dispose them sympathetically. It is well known that "*sound* has the effect of polarising certain particles of matter; it confers upon other particles this same magnetic power," whence crystallisation will ensue—for instance, "the monotonous sound of the railroad in time changes the texture of the carriage wheels and axles from fibrous into crystalline, with consequent fracture." If atoms, then, are drawn within the vortex of sound to dispose themselves about a centre of attraction, it is presumable, from correspondence, that astral forces* would be influenced by the same law, and would be always responsive to the attraction of homogeneity. There is an undercurrent of universal tone, "a resonance upon which depends the evolution of the visible from the invisible"—the very molecules of the human body, especially of the brain, respond to sound. Thus the elementals attracted in sufficient force or numbers by sympathetic sounds form a manipulative ground upon which superior intelligences, whether of more powerful and intelligent *elementals*, or black magicians, or departed souls, may work, combining with them the more physical auras of human beings, to move objects, form lights, human voices, human forms, perfumes; to write or draw on paper or slates, or cause plants to grow, bud, blossom, and bear fruit in a few moments.

There seems to be an ignorant, blind effort to rehabilitate a lost science, which has its good and bad side, its lawful and unlawful methods; and men are apt to drift into the wrong way,

* Or Astral atoms.

which is always sure to be the course at the ignorant commencement of anything. Newly awakened from the sleep of ages as regards all things of the next plane of life-manifestation, whether superior or inferior, they drift into the same old methods of inviting or evoking neighbouring existences, and are still, in many instances, unable to separate the true from the false, or draw the line between what is lawful and what is unlawful. Hence they are often the victims of an hallucination which invests the variously constituted responding entities with personalities that are foreign to them. This exposes them to deception ; but at the same time, from the fact that they *usually* rank their extramundane visitors very high, they are saved from much of the degradation of such associations, which might otherwise ensue. In fact, following a law of nature, they shed their own mental light, purity, and spiritual elevation upon the beings they invoke ; but if they be themselves of a low type, the responsive entities will be of the same order.

These phenomena are the work of astral entities of various kinds, conditions, and grades ; attracted and drawn out upon the gross plane of matter by the formation of a magnetic chain of will-forces, all turned with the compelling stress of strong desire and intelligent direction to their plane of existence. They obey the impetus thus set in motion, and follow the stream chaotically, and confusedly it may be, until some predominating intelligence is attracted to direct them. The predominating intelligence at Spiritistic *séances* is

often the mind of the medium, whose reigning desire has a moulding, or propelling, effect upon the astral fluidic forces; or the strong desire of some one of the circle, or all of the circle: an undeclared intention is sufficient. The astral double of the medium is often the controller; or it yields on its side to the paramount desire of a strong-willed member of the circle. Sometimes all the manifestations will take a form exactly suited to the desires of some strong-willed individual present who is backed by wealth, high position, etc., with an obsequiousness on the part of the "spirits" which wins the warmest expressions of gratitude towards the "dear spirits" for their obligingness; and thanks of a more solid nature to the medium.

The medium is an *unconscious* natural magician, whose astral self exercises the potencies of a science it intuitively understands upon the astral plane; but when conjoined again with its physical double, becomes unconscious of it, or only vaguely dreams of it. Or, again, it (the double) may be aided by the astral doubles of certain persons in the body, who follow "*the left-hand path*"; for there is nothing to prevent, but everything to attract *them* to a field upon which they are accustomed to work.

We have constant proofs of the transcendent powers of the soul in mesmeric subjects who, in the state of trance, display extraordinary abilities, which are completely foreign to them in the bodily condition. This should explain the fact of a medium, when in the bodiless condition, understanding and putting into operation the powers of

a science of which he knows nothing when in the body.

The extraordinary evidences of the action of the "double," even whilst the body is awake, with which the literature of occultism is plentifully stored, would, if rightly considered, throw a great light upon much that is inexplicable in mediumship.

In the interesting phenomena of trance, and inspirational addresses, wherein the mediums are supposed to be "controlled" by spirits who were more or less distinguished on earth, and whose names are frequently given, it is quite possible that the soul of the medium, in a condition of temporary emancipation from the flesh, lifted to a higher mental plane, speaks, or improvises poetry, from its own unassisted powers. It is not at all of necessity that the beautiful and inspired thoughts should be the utterances of a disembodied entity, whose earth-personality was admired and beloved by thousands. That personality may be cradled in unconscious repose waiting its hour of awakening to a knowledge of its changed existence, when, if it led a useful and good, or a pure and beautiful life on earth, it will ascend into a condition so remote and different from earthly conditions that there would be but a very faint, if any, response to an attraction from that quarter. And after the lapse of a certain period, that final separation of all that is earthly takes place in the soul, which then rises into its life of beatitude, to enjoy the *fruits* of he good achieved on earth—the treasures laid up in heaven. After this a merely subjective influence can be

felt from them by minds on earth—those sufficiently purified and spiritual to rise into *rapport* with them. But a medium, self-tranced, or unconsciously mesmerised by an audience, is like a mesmeric subject who yields to the will of the mesmeriser (in this instance the powerful influence of many wills united in one desire), and is floated up from earth as upon a forceful wave of inspiration; comes into *rapport* with higher regions of mentality in the "astral light," and pours forth the floods of beautiful thoughts his temporarily uplifted mind drinks in from those higher ethereal atmospheres. Such a thing is not at all extraordinary. We have all of us these powers latent within us; as the hard, green little bud holds within itself the lovely soft expanse of velvety petals, the gorgeous colouring, and delicious perfume of the perfect flower, to be gradually evolved from its heart. It is only the grossness of our "muddy vesture of decay" which prevents us from displaying them as easily as we express thoughts in ordinary conversation. The more we spiritualise, and diaphanise our gross bodies, the more natural and spontaneous in manifestation become those higher graces and powers of the imprisoned soul; the flashes of a genius which is ours by spiritual birthright, but of which we know nought, because in our earthly condition we are as the prodigal son amongst the swine.

So far as the aid to spiritual advancement goes, we are far more assisted in spiritual growth to *know* of our own latent powers, and how to cultivate and produce them, than to place ourselves as the passive instruments of *other* minds to fill with

their thoughts, however great, which leaves us, after all is over, too frequently like an empty bladder, incapable of anything but the weakest thoughts—in short, in a condition of inanity akin to idiotcy. Although it is possible this does not always take place, yet there are doubtless many who have seen and conversed with mediums accustomed to being almost *continually* in the trance-state, whose minds in their normal condition were of an order nearly approaching to inanity; but who, in the trance, could hold a large audience spell-bound by the eloquence, beauty, and majesty of the thoughts fluently poured forth. We would ask which is the best for the human subject—self-cultivation, or this sort of temporary inflation, which leaves the dull dead blank of utter collapse behind it?

Our object is merely to point out those errors in the pursuit of a misunderstood subject, which must leave behind them the most poignant regrets for a wasted life, which are inevitable when the soul is brought to review its past *in the light of truth*—a period that arrives for all.

The cultivation of psychical gifts to the highest point is wise, right, and beautiful; but the yielding oneself up as an emptiness to be possessed and animated by another is an error which can only retard and hamper, if not render quite abortive, our *own* spiritual advancement. There is, however, a condition we have described before, when the spiritualised soul, who lives *normally* upon a higher plane than that of more earthly minds, may be in a state of open communion and, so to speak, companionship, with emanci-

pated ascended souls, and in moments of inspiration may *consciously* pour forth beautiful thoughts, or give high spiritual counsel, or reveal the unknown. But such beings are rare. They are the products of high spiritualisation, the complete conquest of selfishness and worldliness, and of an advanced stage of evolution which has been reached through the repeated efforts of many lives. All men, although they are not aware of it, display the stage of spiritual evolution they have reached in their daily lives, conduct, and mental calibre. But in some of the humblest lives passed in meek, simple, and unselfish labour in the service of others, the evoluting soul obtains its most transparent and shining spiritual garments. The life may be undistinguished, the last resting-place humble and unknown, but the soul is bright and etherealised from the perfect unselfish discharge of duty.

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The great novelist, Bulwer Lytton, was a student of occult science, and revealed in his works as much of the knowledge he had gained as it was safe to reveal. The extraordinary and alluring pictures he draws have been deemed flights of fancy; but one who reads with insight becomes mentally quickened to perceive much more in his works than appear upon the surface to the ordinary reader. "*Mejnour's*" description of the "Elementals" is so powerful and striking that we transcribe a portion of it here, although it may seem somewhat like going back upon our footsteps. But it is so utterly impossible (as we now learn) for man to live without these entities,

that perhaps to more fully realise their powers and functions may clear off many fogs of ignorance and self-conceit, and help us to live more wisely. Not that this volume of nature's secrets is easily explored; but man may not reckon without the elementals when he attempts to lift even the smallest corner of the veil which hides the invisible world. Without them nature would come off rather limpingly in her manifestations of creative energy. They are of an infinite variety, and of many grades and conditions; from scarcely animated atoms of infinitesimal forms, to those larger assemblages of fluidic atoms whic hform bodies of enormous dimensions and overwhelming power; from the "harmless sprites" which find their homes in the elements, to the creatures which live amongst men, feeding upon their auras.

"In space," says Mejnour, "there are millions of beings, not literally spiritual, for they have all, like the animalculæ unseen by the naked eye, certain forms of matter, though matter so delicate, air-drawn, and subtle, that it is, as it were, but a film, a gossamer that clothes the spirit. Hence the Rosicrucian's lovely phantoms of sylphs, and undines. Yet, in truth, these races and tribes differ more widely, each from each, than the Calmuck from the Greek—differ in attributes and powers. In the drop of water you see how the animalculæ vary, how vast and terrible are some of those monster-mites as compared with others. Equally so with the inhabitants of the ethereal atmosphere, some of surpassing wisdom, some of horrible malignity, some hostile as fiends to

man, others gentle as messengers between earth and heaven. They may be as impalpable to us as the animalculæ in the air we breathe, in the water that plays in yonder basin. Such beings may have passions and powers like our own, as the animalculæ to which I compared them. The monster that lives and dies in a drop of water—carnivorous, insatiable, subsisting on the creatures minuter than himself—is not less deadly in his wrath, less ferocious in his nature, than the tiger of the desert. There may be things around us that would be dangerous and hostile to man, if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, *merely* by *different modifications of matter.*" (Zanoni.)

One might as well attempt to describe the winds which blow, and to follow them on their erratic course of beneficence, or destruction, as attempt to describe, or set forth the powers, or functions, or characteristics, of those mysterious hordes of intelligent or semi-intelligent entities, which nature holds as "forces" in the astral light, and which fill a divine purpose in the economy of nature.

A man magnetically attracts upon the sensuous plane those forces which are latent in his atmosphere, and more or less active in the ethereal atmosphere. Becoming a medium for spirit manifestations, he ignorantly plays with a power which cannot elevate him above the plane upon which he mentally stands. Of this power he should be the master; but in his ignorance of what it is he voluntarily becomes its subject; too often bowing before it, and calling upon

it as upon a god, to favour his prayers and desires. It is the elementals, or the unprogressed earth-walkers, who, acting as guides or "controls," decide and arrange all the manifestations of raps, voices, materialisations, psychography—what not? The mediums, the passive instruments of their efforts to answer the desires and demands of mortals, yielded up to the embrace, the whirling movement and action of creative forces irregularly at work,—which, it is presumable, use his body as a sort of centre or fulcrum—are convulsively agitated, and suffer from an extreme physical exhaustion which many hours' rest are often inadequate to restore. But they endure it with a fortitude and unselfish devotion to the work they have taken up, which is praiseworthy on the part of those who religiously devote their lives to working for the good of humanity. There are too many, however, who never look beyond their earnings, and having got into a coil from which they cannot extricate themselves, they passively resign themselves to circumstances, and continue a life they would otherwise seek to escape from.

And why should all this be? Nature proceeds with grand and majestic steps towards the end she has in view: she sweeps all up together in the on-rushing stream of change and progress. Enlightenment can only come by the will and effort of man intelligently directed to solve the mysterious problems her inscrutable work presents: all work and all suffer together until wisdom finds a way out of the suffering; the true and legitimate road of progression which leads to happiness. Meanwhile the suffering

human *instruments* have aided in the progress of the wholy body ; those unlucky ones who were thrust into false positions by the ignorance of the masses are ground in the mill, often yielding up life, and adding to the vast holocaust of the victims of error. But the lessons have been learned which teach how to deal with that dogging shadow of good—*evil:* and humanity has advanced one great step towards the goal. We have the sufferers ; we have the wise who never seem to drift into error, remaining safely, if selfishly, apart in unmoved calm ; and we have those great and good who gain the victory and become world-teachers, lifting the whole body of humanity by the force of logic and example.

From behind the veil of sensuous life upon which are exhibited the, at present, inexplicable phenomena of the séance-room—like the huge pictures thrown by a magic lantern upon a screen, to set the minds of children inquiring—nature would reveal the wondrous power of the human will, which can set in motion forces of destruction or preservation ; which can wield a creative energy for life or death, for happiness or misery. The dynamic power of thought is as yet only beginning to be dreamed of, and men live in a state of utter ignorance as regards the far-reaching effects of mind-life ; of the wretchedness and misery humanity has piled up for itself from an ignorant disregard of the first principles of human happiness—*innate purity of thought, and brotherly love.* It is man's will, the warring wills of many men, which set in motion every current of evil on the earth. Let each individual but learn

to live in harmony with the divine laws of nature, and co-operate with her in her beneficent labours for the good of the whole, and the astral atmospheres will become purified; wretchedness, disease, and suffering will disappear from the earth, and the occult forces now mysteriously propelled for destruction will become disarmed of all power to injure.

It is essential that the fact of the continued psychical and spiritual existence of man should be established beyond peradventure, or doubt. To investigate such existence involves the gradual discovery of a science capable of explaining all its characteristic phenomena; and of that world which would afford a suitable dwelling-place for beings who have become so essentially different from ourselves. Nature's laws for their well-being must become known to us, and we must learn wherein we, by the action of our will, might aid or retard her work for the good of those who are gathering the fruits—reaping the harvests of the earth-lives laid aside. It is questionable whether we aid them in that process when we continually call them back to earth, by seeking communion other than purely subjective or mental, by which we, on our side, would rise temporarily into that condition wherein they normally live, and would thus not interfere with their spiritual ascension. Man is the only being who, by his will, can subvert nature's laws; when he does so, he invariably commits an evil action, and brings upon himself the retribution which is the effect of nature's efforts to re-establish order and equilibrium. The wise man, held in check by a refinedly sensitive

conscience which is continually exercised in silently adjusting the scales between right and wrong, and thus maintaining his own moral equilibrium, will hesitate and pause ere he permits himself to be led away by the charms of a merely sensuous and material communion, to his own injury and that of the beings he loves who have "gone before," and whom he would not retard in their spiritual ascension by any selfish yearning, or act on his own part. As for the carnal-minded, the sensual and animal souls who continue to hang in a melancholy and homeless fashion in the earth's aura—can we afford to hamper our own progress by associating with these? And what more intimate association can be afforded than by that of permitting and aiding them to return into physical life by materialisations of various degrees of perfection; to give ourselves up, we may say, soul as well as body into their hands, to use our aura, every portion of our organism, as they please, whilst we lie in a passive trance? Is not this the very culmination of idiotic self-destruction? On the other hand, is it right for any of us to encourage another, perhaps less well-informed and instructed than we are, and therefore not so responsible as we should hold ourselves, to pander to our insatiable curiosity to witness a few wonderful performances which, when well understood, become no longer wonderful? When the wise learn the *right* of things they cease to practise the *wrong*.

The sublime science which teaches of the soul's life, its powers, and its ultimate destiny through evolution, is now passing through the incipient

stages of its revelation to man. Its facts may be logically established by lawful experimentation, as well as those of any other science; but unlike other sciences, as it transcends the physical plane, and is purely psychological, it is capable of a spurious interpretation, or has a good and evil side, and the powers it confers may be put to an illegitimate use to the injury of mankind. The human will is the sole operator in the extraordinary processes it involves, and a man in investigating and dealing with it need touch no object of gross matter. He deals with human minds, and the "soul of the world"—the invisible ether, azoth, or astral light; and the auras of human and other bodies. He deals with Thought, which is a substance; and he discovers that a thought may make itself *felt* through stone walls: a thought may sway a large body of people, or the whole of humanity—may be, in short, a lever to lift the whole world. It conveys indestructible magnetism, or life-energy, and may be propelled by a powerful will, like a javelin of light, piercing and illuminating simultaneously.

It is time to rouse the highly cultivated intellects of the West, rapidly settling into the dangerous apathy of materialism, to the uplifting knowledge, from proofs worthy the acceptance of a scientific mind, that there are regions in nature which only that *Soul*, whose existence they deny, can explore.

It is time to convince the ordinary man of the world that he holds his salvation in his own hands, to make or to mar, according to the decrees of his own will; that his mode of life, his tone of

thought, the activity or passivity of his will as regards sensuality or evil, are the essentials in life to which his attention should unceasingly be turned if he would secure his own evolution above the animal grade, upon which he has already lingered, probably during many lives. The *Spiritual* Soul alone survives, and a life of sensual indulgence, selfishness, and animality, will not secure such survival.

It is time man should learn that his will-force, and character of thought, make the aura which surrounds him; which aura would declare to the eye of a Seer, or the delicate, refined psychic feelings of a sensitive, exactly what his innate, and, as he believes, *hidden* nature is like. That indulgence in evil renders this atmosphere of his soul, this aura, poisonous for himself and others, and the prolific generator of moral and bodily diseases.

It is time the revelation should reach humanity of the action of the human will upon the hidden, unsuspected powers and forces contained in the astral light; and that through this supra-mundane agency, every changing influence for good or for evil is effected upon the globe. It is the transmitting element of thought, which it holds imperishable, as it does every other force known to mankind, and many which are not yet known. It is in man's power to charge it with the magnetism of evil, of diseases, of a false and wicked fascination, of delusion, and hallucination. An evil personality, whether in the body or out of it, perchance a Black Magician, acquainted with these occult powers

of the astral light, may so charge it to the confusion and destruction of minds which are unable to ascend out of the reach of his power, or which may ignorantly submit themselves to it. The innate purity of a mind is its only safeguard.

A man must be pure and wise indeed to detect and resist the various currents of evil, or depraved magnetism which pervade the world; but the soul, by intuition, possesses more or less of this power of detection, and instinctively exercises it for self-protection. This power of self-protection may, however, be destroyed, and with it the moral sense perishes. Its preservation is the one thing which insures the survival of humanity, and its continued evolution into a high spiritual condition.

When there is danger, as there is at the present stage of humanity's progress, and as may have happened before in preceding cycles, of the gradual extinction of the moral sense, within a very large area of human life, whence the equilibrium of a normal psychical evolution of the human race must be lost—the minds of men are impelled by an impulse of nature in their own quickening necessities, to desire and seek information upon spiritual matters. The simultaneous occurrence in different parts of the world of incidents of a purely psychological character has excited extensive intellectual inquiry, and a vast amount of knowledge upon the state and condition of life which ensues upon the death of the body, as well as upon the nature, and the gradual evolution of the soul of man, has by degrees

made its appearance in the world. A code of philosophical teachings, founded upon logical grounds, and thence becoming certainty to a reasoning mind, is spreading through intellectual society; by which the justice of the Divine Originator in all which concerns man and the ruling of the universe, is clearly seen. The involution of spirit into matter, which is essential unto creation —else nothing could have existed—originated the possibility of evil; for formless spirit, involving itself in matter to produce forms, *i.e.*, a world,—loses its omniscience on the plane of matter; hence ensues *ignorance*, the parent of evil. Involution, which has been termed "the Fall of Man," necessitates evolution, which is the return of spirit, *which has become individualised*, into original conditions—perfect purity, perfect wisdom, perfect love. After all the stages of material evolution have been passed through, and human mind is evolved, inhabiting an appropriate physical form, the process of evolution gains a higher ground, and becomes mental—thence spiritual—the working of divine spirit through the human mind, or consciousness. Thence ensues a spiritualisation even of the atoms of the body; for the soul makes for itself habitations suitable to the stage of its spiritual progression. Advancement or progression is the *appearance* which accompanies the silent, mysterious triumph of Spirit over matter—the thinning of the veil, until there be no longer a veil—which, as said before, is an entirely mental process. It must always be borne in mind that spirit in *itself* is *perfect*, and therefore can

know no change; it is through *minds* that change is effected. This life is a mere illusion, growing out of the incomplete condition of things; and is therefore transitory, unsatisfactory, and deceptive. The human Soul is the highest outward expression of Spirit, and is capable of being refined to still more and more perfect expression until it becomes *one with spirit, i.e.*, a diaphanous Veil which hides nought from the inner, or transcendental consciousness. Such revelation is *within*, and remains deep-seated and interior —not for any external *telling*, but a deep-abiding consciousness. The soul communes with God in undisturbed bliss. It has reached the plane of transcendental consciousness.

It is certain that persistence in a life of evil produces the destruction of this merely criminal soul of man, which thus becomes a ground untenable for spirit *per se*, the only purifying, uplifting power; which then, rejected, is forced to withdraw itself. The depraved human personalities thus commit spiritual suicide, and men become their own self-destroyers.

So many minds now respond to the revelations of a higher philosophy that its effect is sure to spread, sooner or later, over the whole world; and will be seen in the reformed moral teachings of those whose place it is to teach. The effect of intellectual and spiritual expansion is silently felt, and unconsciously responded to by every mind at all congenially developed; and new ideas, thoughts of a higher tone and better feelings quietly spread through society. Slowly the purer and higher thought-aura

becomes strengthened, and after a time it gains such a powerful impetus that at length all minds are swept up to occupy the higher level.

A complete change in methods of religious education all over the world must inevitably take place from this mental ascension; and methods of government will make a corresponding change. As men advance to a more perfect sense of justice and love of humanity, governments will be marked by a more complete regard for the rights of man, by brotherly love, and greater freedom. Tyranny, coercion of the weak by the strong, and the quibblings of the law in the suppression of the truth, will become unknown. Despotic governments will pass away from the earth. Evolution in these directions has already begun. It is the gradual budding forth of the Spiritual Soul in humanity: the out-breathing of the diviner mind through man, which regulates life according to the dictates of a higher wisdom.

The advanced stage of intellectual evolution of the higher strata of minds in the world demands the present influx of arcane knowledge. It is one of the signs of their attainment of a condition sufficiently exalted to receive it. The day must arrive when the light of this higher knowledge will cover the whole earth, like the rays of the midday sun, beneath which all the nations will advance and prosper.

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